

Iraq frees French TV crew

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq freed a three-member French television team Saturday after holding them for 12 days. Correspondent Richard Binet, cameraman Didier Dahan, and soundman Fabien Briand — all working for the French television channel Antenne 2 — crossed into southern Iraq from Kuwait and were picked up near Nassiriya on April 9. "We have been taken by Iraqi troops because we were going to Nassiriya because there was some fighting over there," Binet told a news conference after his release. He said they have been taken first to Basra, Iraq's second largest city, and then to Baghdad where they spent some time in a private house and then in a prison 30 km from the capital. Binet, who like his colleagues telephoned home shortly after being freed, said they have been well-treated on the whole, but added that conditions in the prison had been more difficult. "We just had the same treatment as all the other prisoners but the conditions of the prisoners here are very bad," he said.

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Kidnapped Bahraini girl released

BAHRAIN (AP) — Bahrain's acting consul-general in Bombay said that a man with a Kuwait-Iraq accent and ranting about the Gulf war kidnapped his daughter for some 24 hours in the Indian city, newspapers reported Saturday. Five-year-old Widad Hobail, daughter of Jaffar Ahmad Hobail, was released unharmed late Thursday, apparently after the kidnapper had second thoughts about the crime, Mr. Hobail told the newspapers. He said that the kidnapper "speaking broken English with Kuwaiti-Iraqi accent" first demanded ransom of between \$90,000 and \$10 million and gave him 24 hours to arrange for the money. The man had taken the girl from her school that Thursday morning, using a letter with a forged signature to induce the school principal to let him take the girl early, Mr. Hobail said. He said he ignored the kidnapper's warning not to call the police. Indian security personnel immediately put a tap on his telephone and sealed all exits to the city to search for the girl, the diplomat said. Soon after the 24 hour deadline ended, Mr. Hobail heard from the kidnapper. "The man ranted about the Gulf war and then told me he did not want the money and he would release my daughter the same day," Hobail told the English-language Gulf Daily News. Later, a caller with an Indian voice said the girl was at the Ambassador Hotel and he could get her.

Sudan says its forces killed 370 rebels

KHARTOUM (R) — Government forces killed 370 members of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in an attack on one of their bases in the south, the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said Saturday. The attack was mounted by troops in Bahir Al Ghazal, one of three states in war-torn southern Sudan. The agency quoted army sources as saying the rebel base had been destroyed. Among the guerrillas killed were the commander of the base and two foreigners. Four government troops were wounded, SUNA said.

Eximbank gives guarantee for house sale to Israel

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Export-Import Bank has approved financing for a \$64.7-million sale of prefabricated houses to Israel for settling Soviet and East European immigrants. The financing would cover sale of 3,000 U.S.-built wooden housing units to Israel's ministry of construction and housing, the U.S. government bank said. About one million immigrants are expected to settle in Israel over the next five years, creating a demand for 250,000 new houses, the bank said. The actual financing will be provided primarily by the Republic National Bank of New York. The Eximbank guarantees the loans as a boost to U.S. suppliers whose industry has been in a slump.

Hostage turns 50 in captivity

BEIRUT (AP) — Kidnapped German relief worker Heinrich Struebig turns 50 Sunday, his second birthday in captivity. No group has claimed to hold Struebig, abducted with fellow German relief worker Thomas Kempner, 29, in the southern city of Sidon on May 16, 1989. The two worked for the German ASME-Humanitas aid agency. They are among the 13 Westerners missing in Lebanon.

Japan said sending minesweepers to Gulf

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu has virtually decided to send minesweepers to help clear the Gulf of mines, Japanese media reported Saturday. Mr. Kaifu was quoted as saying that arrangements for sending the minesweepers had entered the final stage, adding that his government would undertake the work on its own responsibility.

King, Baker describe talks as productive

By Nermene Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AQABA — His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker Saturday held talks on Middle East peace efforts. Both sides later described the meeting as productive and useful.

King Hussein, talking to journalists after two and a half hour of talks with Mr. Baker, said "constructive dialogue" was needed in the "period ahead" towards peace in the region. He expressed hope that "it will not be long before we see some progress."

Mr. Baker also voiced caution against attaching expectations of immediate progress and an immediate breakthrough in the peace process.

The secretary of state, who flew in from occupied Jerusalem at midday after talks with Palestinian leaders there (see story below), said he was pleased with "full discussions" on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem.

He said his meeting with the Palestinians in Jerusalem focused on "the importance of breaking taboos that exist between Arabs and Israelis and between Israelis and Palestinians."

Mr. Baker emphasised he would like to see improved relations with Jordan.

"We discussed ways we can strengthen that relationship in an effort to bring it back to the status

which it enjoyed during the past," Mr. Baker said.

The secretary, who last met King Hussein in Washington in August after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, skipped the Kingdom on his previous two trips.

He will visit Syria, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on his trip and may return to Israel as soon as next week.

In his comments here, Mr. Baker urged parties to the conflict to "create and develop a peace process that could work... peace comes if the parties to the conflict are determined to make it happen."

On Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied Arab territories, Mr. Baker said he disagrees with Israel on this policy.

He reiterated the U.S. stand which considers Jewish settlements in the Arab territories as an "obstacle" to peace.

In a brief opening statement to reporters, the King said:

"I would like to say how pleased I have been together with my colleagues to welcome in Jordan Secretary Baker on this visit and I believe that although the time has been short we have covered much ground and I believe that this is a milestone in terms of relations between our two countries that have grown and developed over many many years suffered maybe in recent times. But it is a relationship based on mutual respect and friendship and commitment towards a better future for the

(Continued on page 5)

Palestinians cautiously optimistic after meeting Baker in Jerusalem

By Daoud Kuttab
Special to the Jordan Times

EAST JERUSALEM — Palestinian political figures from the occupied territories who met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told journalists that they were "cautiously optimistic" and said that some progress was made.

Addressing a crowded press conference at the national theatre in Jerusalem, Faisal Husseini, who headed the delegation said: "The atmosphere was constructive more than the two earlier meetings." He said that while the two earlier meetings were focused on problems and obstacles this meeting concentrated on how to overcome these obstacles. "This meeting touched on substance rather than slogans," he said.

This was the longest meeting yet between Palestinians and Baker and with the Palestinian delegation cut down to three it appears that Palestinians were able to go into details both of the living situation in the occupied territories and the long-term Palestinian aspirations. "For the first time I feel that we were able to go into details about life under occupation in

human terms," said Hanan Mikkil Ashrawi. Apparently during the discussions the American side listened alternatively. "You could hear a pin drop as they were listening receptively and compassionately," she said.

Palestinian participants were,

however, not very forthcoming to journalists with details. They said

there was an agreement not to discuss

details for fear that premature discus-

sion would sabotage whatever pro-

gress was being made. The Palestinian

participants said various formulas for Palesti-

nian participation was discussed includ-

ing independent, joint Jordanian-Palestinian and as part of a single

Arab delegation. On the sponsorship of

the conference they said that both the European and U.N. roles were

discussed as being essential. One par-

ticipant told the Jordan Times that

the reason for Palestinian encourage-

ment is the fact that the U.S. seems to

be moving closer and closer towards an

international parley rather than a

regional one. The participants said

they prefer to refer to the talked

about gathering as a "conference"

rather than a specifically regional or

international conference.

There was also discussion about the

interim self governing arrangement

and the various phases being prop-

osed and the means of linking these

phases.

It was not clear from the Palesti-

nian participants whether they were

(Continued on page 5)

Kuwait names new cabinet, Sabahs keep key posts

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait, under pressure to form a more democratic government, Saturday announced a new cabinet with members of the ruling Al Sabah family keeping key posts.

The cabinet was announced by the crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad al Abdulla Al Sabah.

The entire cabinet resigned on March 19 amidst intense public complaints about the government's difficulties restoring essential services following Kuwait's liberation.

Sheikh Saad removed four members of the royal family from the cabinet but added two other members. In all, there are five Al Sabahs on the new, 21-member cabinet, down from seven on the former cabinet.

Radio Kuwait said Sheikh Salem Al Sabah was moved from the Interior Ministry to take charge of foreign affairs. He was also appointed deputy prime minister.

The prime minister, in a letter

to the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who ran the Oil Ministry for 12 years until last June, was replaced as finance minister by Nasser Abdullah Al Rodhan, formerly in charge of commerce and industry.

Sheikh Salem replaced the emir's long-serving foreign minister and deputy premier, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who was dropped from the government.

The new cabinet replaces a caretaker administration which ran the country after Sheikh Saad's cabinet resigned.

The cabinet resigned amid public dissatisfaction over restoration of basic services after a seven-month Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the Gulf war.

The post of ministry of state for foreign affairs, previously held by a member of the Sabah family, was dropped from the new 20-member cabinet.

The prime minister, in a letter

(Continued on page 4)



His Majesty King Hussein with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Aqaba Saturday (Petra photo)

U.S. forces build camp near Zakho

SILOPI, Turkey (Agencies) — About 500 American marines began building a refugee camp in northern Iraq on Saturday under an allied plan to return half a million Iraqis, U.S. military officials said.

"The first tents went up today in Zakho for the refugees," marine Lieutenant Colonel Michael Boyce told reporters.

He said the marines had crossed the border in battalion strength — 450 to 500 men — by helicopter and had met no Iraqi resistance.

The United States has asked Iraq to pull its troops well back from the Zakho region to make way for refugee havens, a U.S. diplomat said earlier Saturday.

"We asked for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces to a line 30 kilometers south of (the town of) Zakho," the diplomat told Reuters.

"The idea is to give us breathing space in the Zakho valley where we plan to set up transitory camps for the refugees."

U.S. Lieutenant-General John Shalikashvili, allied task force commander, had transmitted the demand for Iraqi army evacuation from Zakho at Friday's meeting with two senior Iraqi officers just inside Iraq.

The Iraqi delegation asked to study the proposal, the diplomat said. "Negotiations are still going on."

Gen. Shalikashvili and allied officers met two Iraqi brigadier-generals, Nuswan Danoun and Abdul Hafiz Jezael, for 50 minutes on the Iraqi side of the Habur crossing between Iraq and Turkey.

The U.S. general said later no further meeting had been arranged, saying issues would be pursued through other channels.

A U.S. spokesman at the Turkish border town of Silopi said the marines had gone in with infantrymen, engineers and civil affairs specialists to establish the first camp near Zakho.

Major Ron Ganagan said work had also started on repairing one of two damaged bridges across the Hezil River, which marks the border between Turkey and Iraq. U.S. supply trucks were expected to cross the river on Sunday for the first time.

About 17,500 U.S., British, French, Dutch and Italian troops plan to set up havens in northern Iraq where refugees now stuck in filthy mountain encampments can be housed.

U.N. agencies must have a clear mandate to work in refugee havens in northern Iraq and need to help plan them to ensure a smooth takeover from allied troops, a U.N. official said Saturday.

Lebanon is Israel's northern neighbour. Israel has said it will only withdraw its forces from a "security zone" inside Lebanon when the Lebanese army and a strong government in Beirut can guarantee the security of its border.

Syrian Information Minister Mohammad Salim said this week Lebanon should be included as a party to any Middle East peace conference or at least its problems should be on the agenda.

During Mr. Baker's visit to the Middle East earlier this month, the Lebanese government called on Syria and Egypt to use their influence with the Bush administration and seek an end to Israel's control of the "security zone" in South Lebanon. The issue is believed to have been a key topic during Mr. Baker's talks with Syrian leaders.

S. Arabia unlikely to attend peace talks

AQABA (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia, contrary to earlier expectations, is unlikely to attend at least the opening session of a regional Middle East peace conference with Israel, a U.S. official said on Saturday.

Senior Saudi officials had predicted that in the new post-Gulf war climate Riyadh would be represented at a peace conference and would exert a moderating influence.

But the U.S. official told reporters: "With respect to the Gulf states, it would be likely that they will not be participating with Israel in the conference but it would be the neighbouring states that

are most likely to be invited to the international conference."

"Lebanon should enter the peace conference not to negotiate its problems but the Palestinian problem as solving this would directly affect Lebanon," Beirut's Al Nahar newspaper quoted him as saying.

Mr. Berri said the U.N. resolution, which calls for an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal, was a decision taken by an international referee and therefore did not need to be revised.

"It is extremely dangerous for Lebanon to enter this thing (a conference) because the government has Resolution 425... and Lebanese diplomacy should work on that," Mr. Berri said in an interview.

Mr. Berri, who was visiting the southern port of Sidon, headed

(Continued on page 5)

Lebanese differ over role in peace parley

BEIRUT (R) — Two ministers in the Lebanese government differed on Saturday over any Lebanese role in a Arab-Israeli peace conference.

Shiite Muslim Minister of State Nabih Berri told Reuters Lebanon should steer clear of a Middle East peace conference but should instead push for Israel to withdraw its troops from its territory.

"Lebanon is not concerned with any regional or international conference but asks the Security Council and the United States to implement (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 425," he said.

Foreign Minister Faris Bouzez, also a close ally of Syria, was quoted on Saturday as saying it was Lebanon's "right and duty to be an essential member of the international conference."

"Lebanon should enter the peace conference not to negotiate its problems but the Palestinian problem as solving this would directly affect Lebanon," Beirut's Al Nahar newspaper quoted him as saying.

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Middle East News

Iraq discloses dangerous weapons, but Washington says it is not enough

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq has disclosed its arsenal of poison gas and ballistic missiles to the United Nations but the United States accused Baghdad of deliberately leaving out its biological and nuclear weapons programme.

Allied diplomats said they agreed with U.S. complaints about the lack of details on nuclear-grade weapons but had more sketchy information on whether Iraq had the capability of conducting germ warfare.

A spokesman at the U.S. Defense Department said the United States suspected Iraq had the capability to create agents for biological weapons but was not certain if the weaponry had been created.

The detailed breakdown of the Iraqi arsenal was presented by Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein in a letter to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

It was the first step by Iraq towards complying with U.N. demands to destroy the missiles it fired against Israel and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf war and the chemical weapons it is alleged to possess.

As required by Security Council resolution adopted on April 3, Iraq's statement set in motion a complicated countdown

that could see the destruction of these weapons in about two months.

Mr. Hussein gave listings and locations of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles in his letter (see separate list) but said Iraq did not possess any biological weapons, while the Security Council had also ordered destroyed.

On nuclear weapons, the foreign minister said all Iraq's atomic materials were used for peaceful purposes and had already been put under safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "They declare no nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons-useable material or other related facilities or activities. We don't think that response is satisfactory."

Other U.S. officials said they were certain Iraq had highly enriched uranium supplied by France and the Soviet Union which could be used for nuclear weapons.

In an implied threat to force Iraq to comply with council resolutions, the Sanctions Committee of the Security Council made no immediate decision at a closed-door meeting Friday on Baghdad's request to be allowed

to sell nearly \$1 billion worth of oil to pay for food and other goods it urgently needs.

The committee is expected to wait until it becomes clear that Iraq will not impede a plan by the United States, Britain and France to set up a protected camp for Kurdish and other refugees, diplomats said.

Nevertheless, the list presented by Iraq was substantial, and according to one Soviet diplomat showed Iraq's willingness to comply with the U.N. resolution.

Mr. Hussein said Baghdad's arsenal contains 51 Al Hussein upgraded Scud-type missiles with a range of 640 km and one Scud missile with a range of 52 to 290 kms.

In addition, it has five Scud-type conventional warheads, 18 Al Hussein-type conventional warheads and another 30 with chemical warheads.

Iraq also said it had four missile launchers and gave their locations, two mobile missile erectors, 28 fixed platforms for ballistic missiles in what it called its Western zone and four missile platforms in the same area.

On chemical weapons, the documents listed the nerve gases sarin and tabun, which kill after a few minutes when the lungs no longer work. But they can be

dissipated in the air, depending on temperature and winds.

The letter said Iraq had 6,920 artillery shells filled with sarin. Another 2,500 saqr-30 short-range missile warheads filled with sarin were under the debris of a levelled storehouse, as were 200 aerial bombs.

Iraq also reported possession of 650 tonnes of tabun along with large quantities of mustard gas in aerial bombs, artillery shells and in storage.

It said that five research and development sites for chemical weapons had been destroyed, presumably by allied bombing in the Gulf war.

Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear sites and its Scud missiles were prime targets of the allied air attack on Iraq that began Jan. 17. Iraq fired the missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia during the war, but never carried out its threat to use chemical weapons in the warheads.

The Iraqi letter says that five chemical weapons research and development laboratories were destroyed by the allied bombing, along with a sarin nerve gas production site, a mustard gas production site, four facilities for "intermediary materials," and five workshops for filling shells and missiles with the toxins.

Mengistu offers to resign

U.N. force includes 300 officers, 36 states

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam, battling major rebel advances in the north, offered to resign if it would preserve the unity of the country.

"As long as it would help restore the unity of the country ... I am willing and ready to step down," Mengistu said Friday in a three-hour speech broadcast on television and radio.

"I ask the Ethiopian people to give an urgent verdict on how best to stem the threat by the northern rebels — be it through peaceful means or force."

Rebels, who control vast tracts of the north and have come within 160 kilometres of the capital Addis Ababa in the past two months, did not take Mengistu's offer seriously and said they would fight on.

The president said he had called an extraordinary session of the Shengo (parliament) to discuss the issue. Diplomats in Addis Ababa said the government's intentions would become clearer at the meeting, which would probably start on Monday.

They noted that as the Shengo represented only Mengistu's single ruling party, it was likely to urge him to stay on.

The speech was well-publicised — Ethiopians were given the afternoon off to go home and listen to it — but some diplomats said it was disappointing because it appeared to offer no new initiative to end the devastating wars in the north.

"We will have to wait and see what comes out of the shengo meeting next week," said one Western diplomat. "This could just be words, although it could be a chink appearing."

Christopher Clapham, an expert on Ethiopian affairs at Britain's Lancaster University, said the resignation offer could be a tactical ploy to stay in power that could backfire.

"It's a dramatic change which could set in train expectations that could put pressure on him to step down even if he has no intention of doing so," Clapham said.

The government is fending off major attacks by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), fighting for a separate state in the Red Sea province Eritrea, which it largely controls, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF).

The EPRDF, a rebel alliance led by the Tigre people's Liberation Front (TPLF), controls large areas of other northern provinces and has advanced towards Addis Ababa since launching a fresh offensive in late February to topple Mengistu and set up a broad-based administration.

Mengistu, who took power three years after a 1974 revolution which overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie and has ruled with an iron band, peppered his speech with appeals for unity.

He said the rebels' true motive was to "carve off northern Ethiopia and set up a new state based on tribal affiliations."

Spokesmen from both main rebel groups greeted Mengistu's speech with scepticism.

"It's a face-saving approach," Asefa Mamo, a senior TPLF official, told Reuters by telephone from London. He added the speech would not affect rebel military strategy.

EPLF spokesman Yemane Meskel, also speaking by telephone from London, said his group wanted more than words.

Through Mengistu did not refer to it, his speech appeared partly to be in response to an unprecedented appeal by a group of Addis Ababa academics earlier this month for the government to step down for the sake of peace.

They urged a ceasefire, a transitional government of community elders and free elections.

CAIRO (AP) — A suspect in the assassination of Egypt's parliament speaker escaped from custody in southern Egypt, a security spokesman said Saturday.

The spokesman, an interior ministry official, identified the escapee as Safwat Ahmad Abdul Ghani, 28, a notorious religious activist with a 10-year record of arrests. He would not discuss details.

Abdul Ghani was among several suspects expected to be charged soon in the machine-gun ambush last Oct. 12 of Rifat Al Mahjoub, speaker of the People's Assembly, outside a Nile-side luxury hotel in downtown Cairo.

The spokesman said Abdul Ghani is a prominent member of the extremist underground group Jihad. It was blamed for the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat and a subsequent failed attempt to overthrow the government.

Abdul Ghani was tried and acquitted in the coup attempt. Since the trial, police have detained him six times in different investigations.

Police sources said Abdul Ghani escaped from a closed police truck while en route to Al Minya, a provincial capital south of Cairo.

The sources said Abdul Ghani and another suspect in the Mahjoub killing, Ramadan Gomaab Fattah, were in the truck with 14 detainees in other cases. Abdul Ghani had been taken to Al Minya from detention in Cairo, where he has been since his arrest last October, to take

shortly after Al Mahjoub's slaying, authorities said Musa was the real target of the assassination by Muslim extremists. They said the five attackers mistook Al Mahjoub's motorcade for that of Musa, who was scheduled to take the same route to his office but deviated at the last minute.

U.N. contingent. Diplomatic sources said they expected each of the five powers to contribute about 20 officers.

The other 200 military observers come from Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Six infantry companies of about 110 men each are drawn from Austria, Denmark, Fiji, Ghana and Nepal and there is a Norwegian-Swedish logistics unit. All are on loan from U.N. peacekeeping forces in Cyprus and Lebanon.

Canada will supply 300 engineers of all ranks. Chile is sending six helicopters with 50 crew. Switzerland is supplying two aircraft and Norway will run a medical unit of 50 people.

It will be the first time officers from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China are serving in the same

China is helping Algeria's nuclear programme — paper

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. intelligence agencies have determined that China is helping Algeria build a nuclear reactor that may eventually produce fuel for nuclear weapons. The Washington Post said Saturday.

It quoted knowledgeable government sources as saying that China may be violating past pledges on transfers of nuclear technology. The paper quoted other officials as saying the disclosure may undermine the Bush administration's plan to renew favourable terms for Chinese

China had pledged in 1984 that it would submit all nuclear technology exports to inspection by officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But the Post said it had been told by officials that none of China's assistance to Algeria had been inspected.

China and Algeria have denied any collaboration on nuclear weapons, according to the paper.

But it quoted intelligence officials as saying the reactor under construction and several years from completion is larger than would be required for routine nuclear research and the construction site shows no provision to extract electric power from the reactor.

It said suspicions have been heightened by the appearance of a Soviet-made anti-aircraft battery near the remote site near the Mediterranean coastline.

President George Bush must ask the congress to renew China's most favoured nation status for trade by June 30.

The House of Representatives voted last year to deny China the status, which provides Chinese goods lower tariffs, because of China's suppression of internal dissent. The Senate voted for the renewal at the urging of Mr. Bush.

Before going to Iran, Mrs. Chalker said she had a very special message for the Teheran government:

"We are going to help you with the problems you have. Please help us bring home those hostages who should never have been taken and kept for so long."

Iran, which says it has infinite but no control over militants believed to be holding the hostages, has called for the release of all captives in Lebanon and the freeing of several hundred Arabs in Israeli jails.

Mr. Velayati said earlier this month that efforts to free hostages had reached a dead end because the United States had not responded positively after several Americans were released by their captors.

Apart from the Britons, six Americans, two Germans and an Italian are believed held hostage in Lebanon.

A radical Iranian newspaper attacked Western plans to create "safe havens" for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

Jomhuri Islami said: "The scope of the safe havens may gradually expand, posing a major security risk. The flagrant military intervention of the U.S. in northern Iran is to create a safe zone to form the nucleus for a second Israel in the region."

"This would result in a new round of chaos, arms race and disorder in the region," it said.

The United States has sent troops to create sanctuaries for the Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq in a move the Baghdad government has denounced as interference.

Iran and Turkey both have large Kurdish minorities which have campaigned for autonomy.

Iran rejects link between British visit and hostages

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani Saturday dismissed any link between a visit by a British minister and Western hostages held in Lebanon.

"Mrs. Lynda Chalker's visit to Tehran has the objective of helping the Iraqi refugees. It is meaningless to connect that issue to the hostages."

"We have no link with the hostage-taking groups nor do we support them," Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as telling a group of students in the southern city of Shiraz.

Mrs. Chalker, the minister of overseas development, discussed the plight of more than a million Iraqi refugees with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

They have streamed over the border since Iraq put down twin rebellions by Kurds and Shiites last month and Tehran says it cannot cope without more international aid.

"Mrs. Chalker said she had come to Tehran to exchange views and coordinate efforts with Iranian officials over British aid to the refugees," the radio said.

Mrs. Chalker said on Thursday she would seek Iran's help in obtaining the release of 12 hostages in Lebanon, including three Britons believed kidnapped by pro-Iranian groups.

The minister handed Mr. Velayati a letter from British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. She said Britain and Iran should work together to achieve peace in the Gulf region.

Mrs. Chalker is the first British minister to visit Iran since the 1979 revolution.

Britain has sent eight tonnes of relief supplies for the Iraqi refugees in Iran. A further consignment of 80 tonnes is on its way.

The national Iranian News Agency IRNA criticised Mrs. Chalker's remarks on the hostages, saying they showed Britain wanted to make political capital out of a humanitarian issue.

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Mahjoub killing suspect escapes from police truck

CAIRO (AP) — A suspect in the assassination of Egypt's parliament speaker escaped from custody in southern Egypt, a security spokesman said Saturday.

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20:30	Arabic News
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22:00	All our Children
22:20	News in English
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Iraq views Jordan a main trade outlet

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraq's main priority is the importation of food and medicine as well as the installation or repair of water purification and power plants, and Jordan will be the main channel for such imports and will later become the main centre for Iraq's trade exchanges, according to Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mandi Saleh.

Quoted by Sawt Al Shabab Arabic daily, the Iraqi minister said that Jordan had developed itself into a major import-export marketing centre and Iraq will consider the Kingdom as its main outlet and medium for trade with the foreign markets.

In the past, the United Arab Emirates served as the main centre for the trade of Iraqi dates, but this centre will now shift to Jordan, the minister said in an interview with the local daily.

According to Mr. Saleh, Iraq has lost up to 50 per cent of its strategic food supplies during the air raids and the subsequent sabotage attacks which brought devastation to warehouses in 13 governorates.

He estimated the losses to Iraqi economy to be around \$300 billion, including \$20 billion in oil revenues during the present year as Iraq will not be able to raise such revenues in view of a U.N.

Conference to tackle Palestine question, world issues, impact of Gulf war

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Palestine question, obstacles that impede concerted Arab and Islamic joint actions, and Islamic issues in Africa and Asia will be among the main topics to be discussed at a general national and Islamic conference to open at Khartoum, in Sudan, Thursday.

Jordan is expected to be represented by at least 10 prominent national political and religious figures, including Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabyat.

Mr. Arabyat, who represents the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan, will leave for the Sudanese capital Tuesday to take part in the meeting which is expected to last four days, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

According to Petra, the conference, organised by the Sudanese World Council for Friendship Among Various Nations of the World will be attended by prominent world intellectuals, politicians and leaders of the Islamic religion in the Arab World.

According to the agency, the meeting will be dedicated mainly to consolidating Arab-Islamic

trade embargo.

The bombing raids destroyed 61 bridges in Baghdad and other cities of Iraq and the subsequent sabotage activities came to pursue the conspiracy on Iraq," the minister said. He said that the Iraqi government had seized documents proving that the internal conspiracy was concocted since the fourth day of the ground battles and hatched by the British, U.S. and Israeli intelligence services.

The minister said that China, the USSR and India had adopted negative attitudes towards Iraq during the aggression because they boycotted Iraq economically and supported the military action against the Iraqi people.

Mr. Saleh said Iraq would now give priority to Arab and foreign countries that did not take part in the U.S.-led military alliance against his country.

The Jordanian economy was heavily dependent on trade with Iraq and lost \$1.2 billion in 1990 because of the U.N. sanctions. Jordan was neutral during the crisis, but its economy was severely damaged and the U.S.-led naval forces imposed a blockade on the Aqaba Port, hampering the Kingdom's import-export operations.

Traffic picks up slowly, yet it has only reached half the before August mark

Aqaba strives to reach pre-war level activities

By Rana Sabbagh

AQABA (R) — Jordan hopes its moribund Red Sea port of Aqaba will spring to life once U.N. sanctions against Iraq are lifted but it may not have the labourers to handle a surge in shipping.

Shippers say traffic is slowly picking up but is still only about half what it was before Iraq invaded Kuwait last August.

Before the Gulf crisis and the U.N. embargo, around 70 per cent of cargo handled through Aqaba went to Iraq, which has limited sea outlets.

Most of Aqaba's Egyptian and Syrian labourers left during the Gulf crisis. Shippers say productivity has fallen because the Jordanians who took over are not used to the tough conditions.

"This will form a real danger if many ships arrive at the same time because it will delay their unloading and in such a case a congestion surcharge could be imposed," one shipper said.

Tawfiq Kawar, head of Jordan's Shipping Association, told Reuters war-risk insurance premiums for the Gulf are almost back to their pre-crisis levels.

But allied searches of ships in the Tiran Strait, south of Aqaba, to check for compliance with United Nations embargo, are causing delays and discouraging many from coming back.

About 55,000 Jordanian workers and their families

Masri discussed the inspections with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva last week.

"Mr. Baker showed extreme understanding of the negative consequences the inspection is having on the economy and transport sector and promised to study the matter and do something about it," a government source said.

Iraq this month accepted a U.N. resolution formally ending the Gulf war. In return, the U.N. Sanctions Committee partially lifted some trade restrictions allowing Baghdad to resume imports of food and other civilian needs.

Jordan says it is fully complying with sanctions against Iraq, once its biggest export market, at a huge cost to normal.

The United States on Wednesday denied a report in London's Financial Times newspaper that it allowed the shipment of military spare parts to Jordan until just before the outbreak of the Gulf war in January.

The White House said the U.S. government had investigated whether Iraqi front companies operating in Jordan were violating sanctions against Iraq but found no evidence to that effect.

The U.N. has said the Gulf crisis cost this impoverished desert Kingdom at least \$1.2 billion in 1990.

About 55,000 Jordanian workers and their families

were badly affected by the stoppage of activity at the port.

"As far as general cargo ships and container vessels are concerned, there has been only a small improvement," one shipping agent said. "Once giant container liners start coming back to Aqaba we can say the situation is back to normal."

The first post-war Iraqi imports of rice, sugar and wheat flour are due to arrive in Aqaba later this month.

Only 43 cargo ships docked at the port in January this year, compared to 127 in January last year. In February, 51 cargo ships reached Aqaba, compared to 120 in February 1990.

The ships are mainly carrying major Jordanian exports such as cement, phosphates, potash and fertilisers.

In 1990, Aqaba handled around 15.5 million tonnes of cargo, compared with 19 million in 1989 and 20.1 million in 1988.

Each tonne of goods reaching the port contributes an average of \$37 to the gross national product, said Akef Abu Tayeh, Aqaba Port Corporation deputy director.

The port, one of Jordan's main sources of income, in the past provided a net revenue of \$44 million a year.

Iraq was almost totally dependent on Aqaba during its 1980-1988 war with Iran, using it to export much of its oil and to import the bulk of its food, commercial and arms needs.

Tanning company makes profit, plans to increase production

AMMAN (J.T.) — Despite the recession of the past year, largely brought about by the Gulf crisis, the Jordan Tanning Company (JTC) made JD 600,000 in profits by selling tanned leather and finished products to foreign markets, according to the company's General Director Talal Al Ghazzawi.

"Last year the company sold products worth JD 3 million, of which 41 per cent went to foreign and Arab countries," Mr. Ghazzawi said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

"The company sells semi-finished and various types of finished foreign makes," said Mr. Ghazzawi.

But Mr. Ghazzawi complained

that the continued importation of foreign made shoes has a negative effect on the company's operations and is bound to weaken the leather industry in Jordan.

"We have been struggling to meet the needs of the local markets for leather for the manufacture of shoes, bags etc. over the past 30 years, but we are still facing this strong competition from the foreign shoes imported by Jordanian merchants," Mr. Ghazzawi added.

"The JTC, which was established in 1957, started production in 1963 on a limited scale, but thanks to the continued endeavours of the workers last year, it witnessed an increase in exports

by 17 per cent over the previous year," Mr. Ghazzawi said.

The JTC has worked out plans to invade European markets following Mr. Ghazzawi's general tour which took him to Germany, Belgium and Sweden.

He said that he had inspected the leather and tanning industries in these countries and found very good prospects for exporting Jordanian leather to them.

The company, he said, is at the same time concentrating its efforts to modernise its machinery and equipment in order to boost production and improve the quality of the finished leather products.

AMMAN (J.T.) — A large International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) relief convoy consisting of 33 vehicles, 2 landcruisers and 31 trucks leaves Amman today. Most of the vehicles (27 in number) carry various items for a "camp module" intended for 30,000 to 40,000 people.

The other trucks transport: 20 tonnes of chlorine (for water purification), 15 tonnes of diesel fuel, 8 tonnes of gasoline and 4 tonnes of kerosene.

Yesterday, April 20, 16 trucks left Amman, carrying: 160 tonnes of rice, 10 tonnes of cement, 34,450 blankets and 4,060 units of kitchen sets.

All these relief items are intended for various regions of the country, especially for the northern part, where ICRC has recently launched a massive relief operation.

More than 260 ICRC delegates, medical staff, sanitation and logistic personnel are working in different countries for assistance and protection activities.

The ICRC delegation in Amman is very much involved as a logistic rear base for the Baghdad

delegation, which alone comprises more than 80 personnel.

In Iraq, the five ICRC medical teams provide medicines and medical supplies to hospitals and medical facilities while assessing the situation related to diseases caused by unsafe drinking water.

There is one sanitation engineer assigned to each medical team. More than 330 tonnes of medicines, medical supplies and equipment have arrived and been distributed in Iraq. An additional 260 tonnes of medical material to combat epidemic diarrhoeal disease arrived in Baghdad on April 14.

A total of 40 ICRC sanitation engineers and technicians are working to purify and distribute potable water in Iraq. National society personnel involved in this operation come from Algeria, Austria, Iceland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The following operations are under way:

Two ICRC mobile water purification units are producing potable water which is stored in

plastic bags for use in hospitals. As of April 13, more than 1,000,000 litres of purified water in bags had been distributed to 28 hospitals in Baghdad, to hospitals in Karbala and Najaf and to schools and 67 social institutions. A third mobile water purification unit is operating in Basra. The fourth mobile water purification unit is producing 400,000 litres per day.

Twenty water trucks (capacity 12,000) transport the potable water to storage tanks. The tanks are located in the most affected urban areas. An additional 10 water trucks will arrive soon and 40 more water trucks have been mobilised.

The ICRC purchased six mobile water purification units (capacity 150,000 litres per day); they will arrive soon in Baghdad.

ICRC teams carried out surveys in northern Iraq. One ICRC team went as far as Kani Masi at the Iraqi-Turkish border. The ICRC has authorised access to the civilian population throughout the country. A first relief convoy has already been dispatched to the north of Iraq.

During this period the Embajada permanecerá cerrada, reanudando sus actividades a partir del 24 de abril.

Ministry's programme to revive tourism sector

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Tourism is launching a wide-scale programme to revive the tourism industry in Jordan in the wake of the Gulf war which was responsible for a great deal of damage to the national economy.

Ministry's Secretary General Nasri Atallah told the Jordan Times that his office had prepared an unprecedented programme for a 40-member group of journalists, tour operators, and tourism writers, representing 35 different tourism offices around Europe, who will be arriving Sunday.

During the week-long tour of Jordan's archaeological sites, which include the ancient cities of Petra, Jerash, Um Qais, the Dead Sea and Aqaba, among others, the group members will be oriented on the tourist attractions of the Kingdom, Mr. Atallah said.

The group members, who will be received by Her Majesty Queen Noor and will hold meetings with Jordanian Tourism Ministry officials to discuss their mission, would be guests of the Ministry of Tourism which is now gearing up for further activities to



in the country. "At the same time the ministry is involved in preparing other programmes, posters, booklets and leaflets featuring the tourist attractions in the Kingdom and in a bid to promote the tourism industry," Mr. Atallah added.

"The programme is being launched now that the war has ended and the various airlines are making a comeback to Jordan," said Mr. Atallah.

In an earlier interview, Mr. Atallah estimated Jordan's loss of income, due to the war, at \$250 million and noted that the country's hotels had, at one time, to lay off three quarters of their employees because of poor business.

Mr. Atallah also said that Jordan would next month display its artifacts in the city of Liverpool in England, and probably in France, later on, in a bid to boost Jordan's tourism industry.

Mr. Atallah said that these programmes were designed to brighten Jordan's tourist image abroad and to erase all the negative aspects which severely affected to tourism industry during the Gulf crisis.

Four charged to death in car accident

AMMAN (J.T.) — A car accident which occurred at dawn Saturday resulted in the death of four young Jordanians and the total destruction of their vehicle which was engulfed by fire.

The Civil Defence Department (CDD), whose teams rushed to the scene of the accident, near the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), gave the names of the four dead people as Hisham Jamil Abdul Jabbar (26), Safer Yousef Asaad Arrafat (22), Abdul Rahim Abdullah Saeed (24) and Iyad Tayseer Abdul Rahman (21).

The accident took place at one after midnight, along the main road passing in front of the (RCC), with the Audi car and its

four occupants heading at lightning speed towards the King Hussein Youth City.

According to Brigadier Deeb Maani, CDD deputy director for operations who led his teams to the scene of the accident, the driver seems to have lost control over the vehicle as he was negotiating a turn of the road and the car was hurled across the street hitting the divider, a bus stop and the pavement on the other side with such violent force that the fuel tank burst into flames. The fire soon engulfed the whole vehicle making it impossible for any of its occupants to escape.

He said that the fire completely burned the bodies of the four

men beyond recognition, and it took CDD teams nearly four hours to put out the fire and to extract the bodies from the burnt out car.

According to Brig. Maani, the CDD team took only four minutes to reach the scene of the accident, but then it was too late to do anything as the car was ablaze.

The CDD, Brig. Maani added, used oxyacetylene flames to cut open the metal sheets of the doors in order to extract the bodies from the

burnt out car.

medical treatment of any worker if he suffers an occupational injury, paying for the medical care and per diem compensation. So far, a total of 61,236 workers were cared for in this manner over the past 11 years," Said Mr. Saqqaf.

"Since the application of the SSC law, a total of 129,137 citizens, Jordanians and foreigners benefitted from these services over the past decade, plus 10,729 citizens who receive monthly pensions totalling JD 47 million so far," Mr. Saqqaf added.

"The SSC takes charge of

SSC benefits 200,000 over past ten years

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) has spent JD 78.5 million on compensation and medical treatment for its beneficiaries since 1980, when the corporation came into existence, according to SSC Director General Mohammad Al Saqqaf.

He said that a total of 201,002 people benefitted from these services over the past decade, plus 10,729 citizens who receive monthly pensions totalling JD 47 million so far," Mr. Saqqaf added.

"The SSC takes charge of

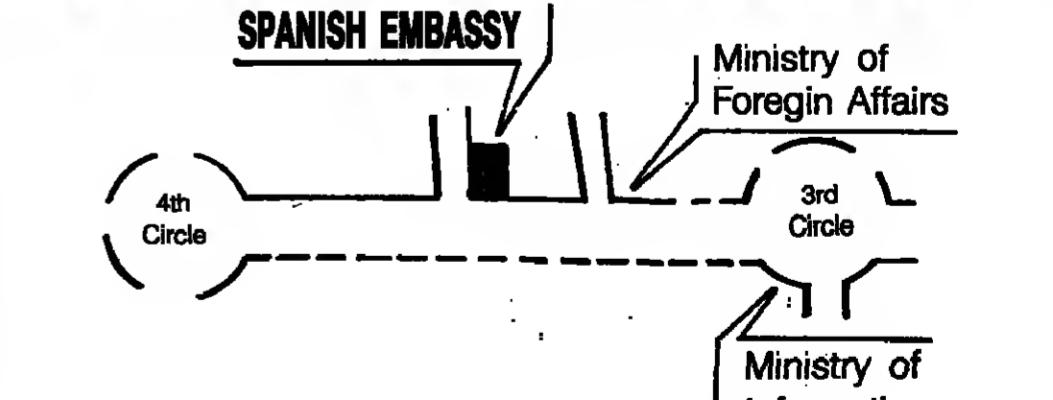
ANUNCIO Embajada de España

La Embajada de España tiene el gusto de informar al público que la Cancillería de esta Representación se trasladará próximamente a los nuevos locales según aparece reflejado en el plano.

Durante este periodo, la Embajada permanecerá cerrada, reanudando sus actividades a partir del 24 de abril.

Los nuevos números de teléfono: 614166 y 614170

SPANISH EMBASSY



ANNOUNCEMENT SPANISH EMBASSY

The Spanish Embassy has the pleasure to inform the public that this Mission will move to its new premises as appears on the map.

During this period the Embassy will close to resume its activities as of the 24th of April.

The new telephone numbers are: 614166 & 614170

Jordan Times

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Testimony of 2 days

IT MAY be too early to draw conclusions from U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's talks with His Majesty King Hussein yesterday, and with Palestinian representatives and Israeli leaders earlier on. But making two or three observations appears inescapable for us.

In their remarks to the press after their meeting, both His Majesty and Mr. Baker sounded satisfied and encouraged by their talks. They agreed that the discussions were productive and useful. A similar note was struck by Faisal Husseini and his group following their meeting in Jerusalem with the secretary of state, who in turn confirmed that some progress was actually made with the Palestinian representatives.

At the same time the American and Arab sides expressed satisfaction with their talks, the Israelis stayed silent. Neither they nor the U.S. delegation had any positive comment to make after many hours of dialogue.

What this means, we do not know for sure. Mr. Baker is continuing his mission in the area, and he may be waiting for a word or some kind of response from Israel. For that we will have to wait and see.

In the meanwhile, it is hard not to observe that whereas the Arabs are keen to start a meaningful peace process based on international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions, Israeli leaders do not hide their reluctance to make the necessary concessions, small as they may be at this stage, to start negotiations which they themselves have demanded for years. First, they will not yield on the issue of European participation in the proposed peace conference, whatever its name is. Then they go along with the Sharon doctrine of establishing more Jewish settlements on Arab lands, which they know to be illegal and a big obstacle to peace. And to top it all, the Israelis continue to insist on choosing their enemy, refusing to sit with the PLO or delegates designated by the organisation, even with Palestinians having dual addresses or deportees.

There are certain, easy conclusions the secretary of state might be reluctant to make: 'What we have outlined, however, are observations that can hardly escape the attention of Mr. Baker and fellow American leaders in Washington and of other people elsewhere.'

In light of what is happening today and the experience of the past, it is up to the Bush administration to discern Arab and Israeli attitudes to see just who stands obstacle to peace. Whether Mr. Baker chooses to admit it or not, he in the end will have to pass judgement on who and what is impeding progress towards settlement of the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Should the secretary take a look today, he would no doubt conclude that it is not the Arab side that is blocking the road to peace. At the least, his effort over the past 48 hours will testify to that.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

VERY LITTLE leaked out from the Baker-Shamir talks Friday, but what has come out of the talks underlined two important views in Israel's strategy: No Palestinian from the Jerusalem area should be involved in talks over Palestine, and there should be no United Nations sponsorship of any talks on the Middle East question. Al Ra'i daily said Saturday. The paper said that these pre-conditions were sufficient to undermine the whole American plan before it is given a chance to see the light. Excluding occupied Jerusalem and its Palestinian people from the negotiations clearly means that Israel holds on to its annexation of the Holy City regardless of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which Baker is reportedly trying to implement, and a reconsolidation of occupation by force, the paper noted. It said that Israel's demand that the United Nations should be excluded from the peace process means that Shamir does not want to see council resolutions implemented. This clearly reflects Israel's lack of concern over peace and stability and its continued drive to avoid the prospect of having to succumb to the will of the international community. By maintaining the no-war/no-peace situation in the area, Israel will not only continue to blackmail the Americans into providing it with financial and military assistance, but it also hopes to continue to have a free hand in establishing Jewish settlements on Arab lands, the paper said. Such an attitude, which is clearly hostile to international legitimacy and world peace and security, does not absolve the United States from its duty to see to it that right and legitimacy are established, and its responsibility to deal with the problems of the region on equal footing with other issues so that peace and security can be established.

Commenting on a decision by a cabinet minister to separate male from female employees in his department, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily says that by so doing the minister is treating people like slaves or workers in his own farm. Salameh Ekour questions the wisdom behind such a move which, he says, is totally isolated from all other public and private establishments in the Kingdom. The writer points out that male and female employees mingle in public transport and other public places and their working together in offices has been most beneficial for the members of the public — males or females — visiting government departments all the time on business. Should separating males from females in government offices be generalised, then each department would require separate male and female heads of sections and administrative areas and probably male and female ministers for that matter, says Ekour. Should separation involve public transport separate cars and busses will have to be made available; and both measures would cost the country a fortune which it cannot afford and which can lead no where except further complications, he argues. Are these the rules of Sharia (Islamic law)? And if so, they should be applied to all sectors with no exception, and in doing so all members of the public should be first convinced of its feasibility and benefit, the writer adds. Ekour says the time has come the men to stop considering women as mere slaves whose duty does not exceed the limits of cooking, raising children and entertaining men.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Jordan's economy — boom or bust

THOSE WHO have reasons to be unfriendly to Jordan and harm its economy take one of two extreme views in their evaluation of the Kingdom's current economic situation. Part of these claims that Jordan's economy never had it so good, it is booming. The other part looks at the same set of facts but concludes that the economy is at the verge of collapse under the impact of the Gulf crisis.

The purpose of the first extreme viewpoint is to deny Jordan Arab and foreign aid and, to urge creditors to put more pressure on Jordan to extract some of its foreign exchange earnings. The purpose of the opposite extreme viewpoint is to raise doubts regarding the future viability of the Jordanian economy and its ability to recover and survive.

The truth is not in one extreme or the other. The Jordanian economy did actually face difficult circumstances and was hit by the Gulf crisis in many ways, especially the loss of Arab aid, expatriates remittances, exports, tourism and transit activities. However, the Jordanian economy proved itself to be resilient and able to adjust, stand the most difficult times and provide the basic needs of the people. The Jordanian economy does not have surpluses to enable the country to do without external aid, or to resume servicing its heavy debts.

Evaluation of the Central Bank's reserves in the form of gold and foreign currencies is also subject to the two extreme judgments. Some analysts argue that Jordan's reserves are too shallow, that

the current stability of the exchange rate of the Jordan dinar is only a temporary phenomenon, and that the domestic markets will soon experience acute shortage of imported commodities.

When officials try to say that the level of reserves is rather healthy and much better than any time in four years, other analysts would read too much into these pronouncements to conclude that Jordan does not need to be aided and that repayment of foreign debts should be resumed immediately.

The same contradicting extremist positions can also be found in assessing the extent of poverty among the Jordanian population. A study by some United Nation agencies such as UNICEF indicated that one third of Jordan's population are now under the line of poverty against one fifth before the Gulf crisis.

The purpose of dramatising the extent of poverty may have the good intention of attracting more donations to help mothers and children in needy families, but some foreign journalists used the UNICEF rough estimate out of its context to undermine the social record of the regime. The line of poverty in a given country is relative. Perhaps more than one third of the Jordanians live below the line of poverty as determined by European and American standards, but no so by Third World standards.

Jordanian officials have to blame themselves for exaggerating the damages suffered due to the Gulf crisis, such as claiming that 50 per cent of the GNP was knocked off overnight. This understandably

caused some otherwise honest observers to think that the Jordanian economy was going under in total collapse. Other officials have also to blame themselves for claiming that the situation is excellent, which caused some creditors to knock the doors with bags to fill.

The level of foreign reserves owned by the Central Bank is definitely good in comparison with its level two years ago, when the net position was negative. The current net reserves can finance Jordan's normal flow of imports of two months, which is not bad but still insufficient. In Jordan's circumstances of huge and acute deficit in the balance of trade, Jordan should maintain reserves equivalent to at least six months of imports to secure safety and fine-tune the ups and downs in an environment of extreme uncertainty.

The Central Bank scored a remarkable success in rebuilding the depleted foreign reserves out of scratch. This was an achievement in comparison with below-zero reserves in 1988/1989, but there is still a long way to go before the Central Bank can rest assured of continued stability.

It is not in our interest to exaggerate the financial strength or weakness of Jordan. Both overstatement and understatement are harmful. It is much better to stick to the facts. Only the objective facts to serve the Jordanian economic interests and support public confidence. The facts indicate that the Jordanian economy is well managed, but it needs continued external aid injections for years to come and deserves substantial relief of debts.

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

A world beyond order and control

By Theo Sommer

WAS IT only last year that George Bush proclaimed his New World Order. And only at the beginning of March that the victorious president told a cheering U.S. Congress that the Gulf war for the liberation of Kuwait had been the "first test" of this "new world coming into view"? Barely six weeks sufficed to shatter the vision.

The New World Order, if it had much of a chance, came to naught on the chilly mountain slopes of northern Iraq. It lost its moral underpinning when the Kurds were callously left to Saddam Hussein's slaughter squads. The Gulf war had been mounted in order to uphold principle — the principle that international borders are inviolable and aggression must not stand. But when Saddam trampled the basic human rights of the Kurdish people underfoot, leaving them only the choice between facing death or suffering exile, between genocide or expulsion, the self-appointed guardians of principle studiously looked the other way.

This saddening triumph of selective morality revealed the Kuweit campaign for what it had been, all along: an unabashed exercise in national self-interest, only thinly veiled by invocations of principle. The misery of the Kurds elicited no comparable response: principle not enshrined in cold calculations of self-interest is a waif.

This is hardly anything new. In fact, it has been the hallmark of all world orders since time immemorial. Expediency rules, and most of the time it rules over moral considerations. This is the way things are. Perhaps it is the way they will always be. But the descent from last January's moral high ground to the moral morass of March was soberingly precipitate. The new dispensation envisaged by George Bush could not survive the tumble.

There is no use shedding too many tears over its sudden demise. From the time the New World Order was first proclaimed, it was a thoroughly flawed concept. It was based on the expectation that, after the Soviet arch-enemy had obligingly dropped out of the race, the cold war would more or less go on, albeit from now on without a specific focus — with the United States riding high, exercising a sort of unipolar hegemony after 40 years marked by an American-Soviet duopoly. Europe and Japan acquiescing in even hailing Washington's leadership, if not dominance: the United Nations gladly dancing to the tune of the American piper (never mind that he had not bothered paying his dues for quite some time); and the turbulent Third World willy-nilly submitting its controversies to U.S. arbitration.

The unspoken assumption was that American military power, while considerably reduced after the end of the cold war, would serve as the ultimate arbiter; that the industrial democracies would share the financial burden of such arbitration; and that the developing countries, in the absence of another world power to look to for help, would by and large be happy to conform to the views of the only remaining superpower.

The flaws of this concept were obvious from the beginning. There cannot be such a thing as unipolar hegemony. America may feel a disproportionate responsibility to lead, but even its allies will not always and everywhere feel inclined to follow. The United Nations is still a far cry from a world organisation capable of acting under its own steam; but as it gradually gets its act together it is a safe bet that it will be less and less disposed to take its cues from White House cue cards. Maintaining and restoring

will neither be deflected nor overwhelmed by the aftermath of our recent Orleto preoccupations. They were, first, the sustained effort to forge the European Community into "a more perfect union"; second, the impetus to take advantage of progressive detente to bring Eastern Europe into the fold; third, the endeavour to put Europe's relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union on a less threat-ridden basis; fourth, the attempt to demilitarise world politics by pushing for large-scale disarmament; fifth, the need to meet the basic challenges of the 21st century: poverty in the southern part of the globe, environmental degradation, the threat of a climate catastrophe.

It is not easy to discern what will flow concretely from this new agenda. But if one extends the trends listed above to the threshold of the next century, a pattern emerges that deviates significantly both from the dispensation of the cold war and from Bush's concept of a U.S.-centred New World Order.

Europe, however haltingly, will continue its march toward unity. Deepening and widening will of necessity go hand in hand. As the institutional bonds grow denser, membership is going to expand. Twenty-four or even 30 EC members by the year 2000 would not seem to be an unrealistic expectation. This number is likely to include most of the present EFTA countries, three or four East European states, perhaps three or four independent republics emerging from the break-up of Yugoslavia, maybe Turkey, Cyprus, Malta.

To cope with the problems such a drastic expansion will cause, and to preserve the political finality of the European enterprise, an *a la carte* approach is almost inevitable. Not every member must assume identical obligations right away: only a core group will share the commitment to currency union as well as to full-fledged political union. For some time to come, variable geometry will inspire Europe's Grand Design.

Next, the requirements of detente and rapprochement. Preoccupation with vital interest. Moral imperialism would quickly come to be perceived as equally hateful as the classical garden variety of imperialism. The Third World (or rather the several Third World) needs development aid from the North, not military aid, meddling or pious posturing.

Of course, a world order along these lines is quite unsatisfactory. It leaves a lot to be desired, offers no clearly drawn lines, does not promise the millennium. But we might as well bow to the inevitable: The salient features of any new order will be a large measure of disorder, loose ends, uneasy arrangements. Interventions — whether for moral reasons or for reasons of expediency — are likely to produce untoward results. Better to shun what we have than to jump into the pit of open-ended foreign engagements.

At the same time, the end of the cold war facilitates, even necessitates, a re-ordering of Europe's relationship with both Washington and Moscow. As the military components of power lose their crucial importance and economic factors assume greater significance, it is imperative that NATO, while providing coordinated reassurance to its 14 European and two North American members, be supplemented by two things: First, other security arrangements under the auspices of the EC or the WEU and second, an additional European-American forum geared primarily to dealing with economic, financial and commercial issues. The more the old military threat recedes, the more crucial will this new entity become, for it is in this field that competition and rivalry may engender conflict. And looking East, the Community cannot but provide venues of and avenues toward co-operation with the Soviet Union. There are compelling reasons to assist Russia's arduous transition from failure to viability. Of course, it is primarily the Russians themselves who will have to steer through that narrow and difficult passage, but they need not only navigational assistance.

Given the tremendous strain on resources everywhere, we can count ourselves lucky that the military element in world politics no longer constitutes the central factor, overriding everything else. Normal times are here again. To be sure, we must not let down our guard as long as the Soviet Union is not beyond the shadow of a doubt. But we should not overdo the remaining threat. Germany is united, the Warsaw Pact dissolved. If everything goes according to plan, by 1995 only half a million soldiers — all Western! — will be left on German soil — three years ago

the Gulf war was not the seminal event giving shape and direction to the future. The trends likely to mark the final decade of the 20th century were visible much earlier — and they

LETTER FROM BAGHDAD BY HAND

By Lamis Andoni

IN A KITCHEN lit only by a kerosene lamp, members of three generations of one Iraqi family were debating the future of Iraq. The grandfather, the mother and the daughter were in agreement that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the military defeat and had to go. But, like most Iraqis, the three found it difficult to even suggest an alternative leader.

Reminiscing on the good old days of the monarchy, which ended tragically in 1958, the grandfather argued the country was full of good and qualified men. The mother was nostalgic for the old days of Baathist rule in Iraq — when "ideals and not corruption prevailed."

The 20-year-old daughter found herself at a loss. She knew no other model than Saddam and he has disappointed her. She detested other Arab leaders who joined the allies in the war against her country but blamed Saddam for the humiliation she felt.

Bushra, as she is called, is an example of a lost generation which grew up under Baathism but never really captured the nationalist spirit that had gripped the first generation of Baathists. They felt alienated from the system which was based on repression and fear. The nationalist slogans that ignited the struggle of their fathers in the 50s and 60s appeared hollow and empty, if not simply a means of crudeness.

Principle must not be divorced from vital interest. Moral imperialism would quickly come to be perceived as equally hateful as the classical garden variety of imperialism. The Third World (or rather the several Third World) needs development aid from the North, not military aid, meddling or pious posturing.

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Unexploded weapons, pollution continue to plague Kuwait

By Jacquelyn S. Porth

KUWAIT CITY — Unexploded Iraqi weapons — mines and other munitions — must be dealt with as quickly as possible before the rest of Kuwait's exiled population returns home, a World Health Organisation (WHO) official says.

Appealing to international community to support Kuwait in its efforts to overcome its massive pollution and weapons problems, Dr. Daniel Tarantola noted March 28 that relatively few of the vast amounts of Iraqi munitions and weapons have been cleared by coalition mine-disposal forces despite "the gigantic effort" they have made.

While the sound of constant pounding continues as more and more of Iraq's abandoned arsenal is systematically eliminated, the WHO official acknowledged that it is "technically very difficult to demine the whole area of Kuwait."

Although encouraged by the declaration by the French Daguet detachment that the first segment of a beachfront area in the capital is now "mine-free," Tarantola pointed out that Kuwaitis who have been living outside of the country are unprepared for the hazards left behind by Iraqi. Unexploded ordnance is killing people — usually children — every day, he noted.

It took the French forces almost three weeks to clear an area of sand about one kilometer long due to the heavy concentration of mines, booby traps, barbed wire, bunkers, trenches and obstacles. Working in various parts of the city, the detachment recovered more than 9,300 mines and destroyed 230 tonnes of ammunition.

Tarantola, who heads WHO's relief programme, acknowledged that a long-term effort will be required to eliminate the ordnance. He said he expects some of the coalition demolition experts to continue their work at least through the end of June.

Dr. Michael Gwynne, director of the Global Environment Monitoring System for the United Nations environmental programme, agreed, saying the presence of unexploded objects which litter the countryside in many places will pose an environmental and social problem for some time to come.

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Tarantola and Gwynne spoke at a press conference in connection with the work in Kuwait of a team of WHO specialists who are in the country to assess its needs and develop recommendations over the next six to 12 months.

During that period, a medium-to-long term plan will be formulated, along with recommendations which will be sent to the WHO secretary general and Kuwait's Ministry of Public Health.

The specialists will attempt to determine the effect of the hundreds of burning oilwell fires on Kuwait's people, as well as the atmosphere, climate, soil, wildlife and livestock of the entire Gulf region.

Dr. Hassan Barudi, director of WHO's Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities, said it is essential to monitor "every possible aspect" of the troubled environment, because there may be further problems that "we don't know about." He emphasised that "citizen participation" will play an important part in the effort.

Dr. Ibrahim Hadi, who works for Kuwait's Environmental Protection Council and with the health ministry, noted that it has been difficult to determine the extent of oil pollution in adjacent Gulf waters because of the continued presence of Iraqi sea mines. Iraq's deliberate spilling of oil into the Gulf and fallout from the oilwell fires have severely damaged the marine environment.

While experts have yet to recommend special precautions for persons in good health, Hadi says those who have heart ailments or allergies should stay indoors on days when pollution levels are extremely high.

Dr. Rashed Al Owish, director of public health in Kuwait, said most of the people who are suffering allergy and breathing problems have had such symptoms in the past. He also noted that pollutants tend to affect peo-

Scholars see problems for post-war Middle East

By Berta Gomez
USIA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — A group of Middle East scholars brought together to discuss different aspects of the Gulf war and its aftermath held out little hope for a serene and prosperous post-war period.

They were also sceptical about the possible expansion of political freedoms in the region, although most noted the growing calls for democracy in several states.

These experts participated in a two-day symposium sponsored by Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, on two of the three panels that held discussions on April 18. Three additional panels of experts spoke on April 19.

Making up the first panel were Shamian Al Essa, a professor at the University of the United Arab Emirates; Bouthaina Shaaban, an associate professor at Damascus University; and Jo-Anne Hart, assistant professor of political science at Brown University.

The second group included Phebe Marr of the National Defense University; John Duke Anthony, president of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations; and Hanu Faris, a fellow at the University of British Columbia's Institute of Asian Research.

The most pessimistic assessment of the post-war period came

from Mr. Jo-Anne Hart. Countering those who claim the Gulf war is "over," she noted that its direct consequences will continue to wreak havoc with the lives of Iraqis and their neighbours for the foreseeable future. "The Middle East," Hart said, "is far worse off as a result of the war."

She described the regional economic fallout as overwhelming. Not only will the cost of repairing war damage be huge, but predictions of lower oil prices could mean that all of the Gulf states will see their income significantly reduced.

According to Hart, those financial constraints will be felt throughout the Middle East and the rest of the Muslim World.

Countries that previously received generous foreign aid from the Gulf states can expect those payments to fall. More importantly, there will be less money available to pay foreign workers in the Gulf region. Given the fact that for many Arab and Muslim states "their remittances account for their economic independence," their loss could be devastating.

She added that her predictions were tentative and that the results of the Gulf war could be less severe, but stressed that she was not optimistic. "The bottom line on the consequences (of war) is that I hope we've seen the worst, but I fear that we have not."

On the other hand, Marr stressed that "the human and social costs of this war are a lot higher." Not only did the war reduce the number of healthy young men available to help reconstruct Iraq, but "the population itself is in a state of trauma," Marr said.

The massive flight of the Shi'ite and Kurdish refugees further complicates the situation in Iraq, and "creates a destabilizing factor all along (its) border," Marr said. Among other things, "It gives Turkey and Iran the means and

motive to interfere." Similarly, the new enclaves which will be protected by western forces "are an infringement of Iraq's sovereignty... (and create) a new and volatile situation" in the country, she added.

Marr took issue with a recent United Nations report that described Iraq as having been bombed back to the "pre-industrial" age, and asserted that "there has been extensive damage in some areas but not in others."

She argued that if it were possible to restart Iraq's electricity grid — perhaps using generators — then many of the most severe problems facing the Iraqi people could be eased. Most significantly, they would be able to reopen water purification plants. Marr also claimed that reports revealed only "minor damage" to Iraq's agricultural and light industry sectors.

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exhibited a "dominant/subservient" relationship during the war. "The Arabs lost control of the situation" once they invited the westerners in, Faris said.

He noted that while some Arabs strongly support Washington's efforts to broker a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, others have misgivings. For those Arabs, Faris noted, the question is: "does the United States mean to apply the same standard of decency elsewhere that it... (applied) to Kuwait?"

For his part, Hanu Faris suggested that one way to ameliorate Iraq's suffering is to "begin the healing process" as soon as possible. For humanitarian reasons, as well as to shore up regional stability, he suggested that the coalition partners "should not treat Iraq as an outcast nation."

Faris also predicted that any extended U.S. military presence in the Gulf region would have deeply negative repercussions. "People will forget why the Americans came in in the first place... Their presence will be dubbed imperialism," he said.

Addressing the issue in more general terms, Faris expressed concern that the creation of the multilateral coalition and the very introduction of U.S. troops into the Gulf region only worsened problems that already exist among Arab states.

Some Arabs, he said, believe that the western and Arab allies

However, he said there were clear signs of growing discontent with the status quo. "The failure of existing regimes to deal with the (Gulf crisis) convinced many that 'the only way not to have any more Saddam is to have more political participation,'" Essa said.

Essa acknowledged that he was "not very optimistic" about the prospects for democracy in the Arab World, but suggested that the transformation of only one state could be significant. A democratic Kuwait — where there is "a real popular demand for political participation" — could serve as a model for other states, he said. "Its success could lead to change in the Gulf."

One change in the Arab World that deserves more recognition, according to Bouthaina Shaaban, is the increasingly important role of women — especially in times of crisis.

She noted that women have participated in the Palestinian uprisings that have taken place in the Israeli-occupied territories and that the only public protests held in occupied Kuwait were led by women. In these, as well as in other cases, Shaaban said, "women are the unacknowledged soldiers" of the Arab World.

She expressed hope that the Gulf crisis will make possible a comprehensive reconsideration of their role.

Aqaba talks

(Continued from page 1)

plies as well as the minuses — and discussed ways in which we can, in the future, strengthen that relationship in an effort to try and bring it back to the status which it enjoyed in the past."

Answering questions, in reference to the Gulf war, King Hussein said: "...During these dangerous times, we were able to keep our two countries (Jordan and Israel) out of war... we have to work hard so that this window of opportunity (for a regional settlement) is not lost."

On the question of Palestinian representation in peace negotiations, the King said the Palestinian component in the Middle East problem "must be addressed by the Palestinians themselves."

But he left the door open for the setting up of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation provided Jordan is asked by the Palestinians.

Gwynne said there is considerable speculation about the possible presence of poisonous hydrogen sulfide gas, but, he noted, there is no data to back it up. He stressed that facts and figures are needed quickly and to obtain

who have been under occupation for so many years and they have been on a regular basis have had to deal with Israelis and meet with Israelis. I mean what makes one a better Arab sort of stay out of it and say that I am a better Arab because I am not involved? No!

The question is not one of meetings and contacts or taboos or not; the question is one of responsibility and the times ahead and I believe that if these were some of the impediments that have been there they should be removed. People should talk. There have been many stories and many suggestion about contacts and meetings but nobody has ever been able to say that we gave in to Palestinians rights. The Palestinian dimension has to be addressed by the Palestinian people. We will support them: We are talking now about a possibility of a conference if you want to go at it their own way we are ready to support them; if they want to approach us to be a part of a joint delegation, if it begins with a conference, fine we will look at that. I think we have to be flexible enough, imaginative enough.

There has to be a process of education regarding peace, both on the level of Palestinians and Israelis. What does peace really mean? What does it offer this region in terms of the present and in terms of the future? So, believe me, we are looking very open minded at everything," the Monarch told reporters. "It's been my dream and my hope to see an end to this tragic chapter."

Asked whether Jordan was ready to join a peace conference, King said:

"I believe that the secretary was kind enough to refer to our talks and refer to question of taboos. Well, personally I have never believed in all those that have passed, that these taboos should be an impediment to making real progress to the attainment of peace. I do not know what its name will be, will it be a peace conference — will it be... this is still something the secretary is involved in and many friends in the world are concerned with. I believe we should move away from old cliches. We should set our rights to ensure that this window of opportunity is not lost. And when you have a situation where people are people

struggle is closer to a happy end, we have to go on believing in our cause and in our unity in order to make this optimism a reality."

No progress seems to have been made on the role of the PLO. When asked about this Mr. Hussein said that the U.S. position remains, the kind which is that their dialogue with the PLO is suspended and not terminated. When asked about the role of Arab Jerusalemites Mr. Hussein said that he an Arab Jerusalemite has attended every meeting with Mr. Baker.

Palestinian participants were careful to qualify their statements by saying that they were not negotiating but merely involved in exploratory meetings. They said that they will relay what they heard to the PLO delegation, if it begins with a conference, fine we will look at that. I think we have to be flexible enough, imaginative enough.

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for the purpose of launching a genuine and effective peace process in the right direction and with the participation of genuine representatives. They must not be misconstrued as either negotiations or tacit agreements.

The substance of the peace process must deal with the implementation of U.N. resolutions and the national rights of the Palestinian people, without digressing into issues of subjective interpretation or being made subservient to Israel's priorities and its de facto exercise of domination and control.

The mechanism of the peace process in the U.N. sponsored international conferences and the comprehensive integrated approach remains crucial to the fulfillment of the rights and needs of all parties involved. A full and sustained European participation during the whole course of the process is essential for ensuring its success and for laying the foundations for enhanced regional cooperation and development.

From the outset, the issue of assurances and guarantees must be addressed and settled in order to prevent Israel from shifting the geopolitics carrying out punitive measures against the Palestinians, violating any interim agreements, or sabotaging the process in any other way.

A legal frame of reference has to be adopted clearly and openly for the whole process, based on international legitimacy, and binding on all participants. The Palestinian delegation must have recourse to fixed legal reference especially in the prevailing conditions of asymmetry in power. In addition, the whole process of negotiations, as well as the period of implementation of agreements must be carried out within that legal framework.

The objectives of the peace process require lucidity and unequivocation. The "land for peace" formula must mean an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of all the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, the capital of the future Palestinian state. Israeli withdrawal and the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty over the liberated Palestinian lands constitute essential components of any genuine peace process.

The Palestinian right to self-determination, the right of return, the right to independence and to the control of our own lands and resources are basic to the exercise of sovereignty.

We understand these meetings with you constitute exploratory steps

to the table at the same time, where do you draw the line?"

U.S. officials did not specify the front-line Arab states expected to participate in the talks. Presumably, they would include Syria, Jordan and Egypt, and possibly Lebanon.

Rather, Mr. Baker said, "I think there is a feeling on the part of the sometimes called front-line states, the states neighbouring Israel, that the issues in dispute are issues that affect Israel and those states, and issues that affect Israel and Palestinians.

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to the table at the same time,

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Holyfield retains title after 12-round battle with Foreman

ATLANTIC CITY (R) — Evander Holyfield won the fight but George Foreman retained his dignity at the end of their 12-round battle for the undisputed world heavyweight title.

Holyfield kept his crown Friday night with a unanimous points decision and proved he could take hard punches without panicking and abandoning his fight plan.

The champion also took another step toward gaining the respect he and his corner feel has eluded him.

Foreman, a 4-1 underdog, was a winner by merely being 42 years old and giving a very creditable account of himself over 12 brutal rounds against a man 14 years his junior.

"He won the fight. I proved a point. I came within inches of winning the title," Foreman said.

Some of the lack of respect for Holyfield comes because he won the title from a fat and unmotivated James "Buster" Douglas last October.

The other key reason is that he has not defeated former champion Mike Tyson, who for many boxing fans is the true heavyweight champion.

Now it would appear that if the two promoters, Don King for Tyson and Dan Duvia for Holyfield, can bury the bitterness between them, Holyfield's next challenge will be to fight Tyson.

"It was a good night for me," said Foreman, whose face appeared puffy at the post-fight

press conference. "I proved to the whole world you don't have to be ashamed of being a senior citizen."

Foreman, who earned \$12.5 million for his efforts, said: "I thought I had him a few times. You tried to finish him, he'd finish you. He's a tremendous champion."

"I had him a few times, not to mention he had me too. I didn't retreat did I?" a proud Foreman said.

Foreman rocked Holyfield several times in the fight, but the champion had Foreman in trouble as well.

Several times Holyfield, who received \$20 million for defending his title, was able to land furious combinations to the head almost at will.

Holyfield appeared to be close to chopping down the 257-pound (116.5-kg) Foreman in each of the third, seventh and ninth rounds, but the fiercely-determined challenger, although wobbly at times, refused to quit.

"Every time I had him hurt the bell rang," said Holyfield, who weighed 208 pounds (94.3kg). "I hit George with all I had."

For five years I hit guys with all I had they went out," he didn't.

"I found out I couldn't run him over," Holyfield said. "I had to be tactical."

"At 42 who would think George would go 12 rounds with me and fight a furious pace?"

"The toughest thing about the

fight was the pressure George put on," Holyfield added. "It was relentless pressure. He forced me to stand in there and take punches I shouldn't take."

One of the surprises of the fight was that it went 12 exciting rounds.

The theory had been that if the fight did go 12 rounds it would mean Holyfield was running away from an exhausted Foreman.

But it was one of the most competitive heavyweight title bouts in recent years. Both fighters at times appeared to be close to victory.

"There is no dignity lost," Foreman said of his performance. "The boy is a fine champion."

Holyfield said he saw no reason to fight Foreman again, but later Duvia said: "If the public wanted it we would do it again."

Foreman said he did not know whether he would retire and give up his bid to become the oldest man to win a heavyweight championship.

Earlier Friday, heavyweight Tommy Morrison, who played a boxer in the movie *Rocky V*, remained unbeaten Friday night by stopping Yuri Vulin of the Soviet Union in the fifth round at the Convention Centre.

Morrison, however, was not impressive in running his record to 27-0 with 23 knockouts.

Vulin had the best of the first four rounds, rocking Morrison several times in the third and raising a mouse under his right eye.

Midway through the fifth round, Morrison landed a right to the ribs and Vulin turned away and went to the ropes, where he was given a standing eight-count.

A short time later, Morrison landed another right to the ribs. Vulin again grimaced, clutched his side and went to the ropes, and the referee stopped the match at 2:06 of the round.

A computer analysis of the match, a preliminary to the Holyfield-Foreman heavyweight title fight, was outpunched 131-55.

It was the sixth straight bout inside the distance for Morrison, 223 pounds (101 kilograms), of Kansas City, who is ranked no. 8 by the World Boxing Association (WBA).

Vulin, 209 3-4 pounds (95 kilograms), from Latvia, lost for the second time against 10 victories.

A 10-round lightweight fight between Jorge-Paez of Mexico and Lope Suarez of Corpus Christi, Texas, ended in a technical draw after four rounds when Suarez couldn't continue because of a bad cut over his right eye. The bout was ruled a technical draw because it hadn't gone halfway.

It was the first fight as a lightweight for Paez, 135 pounds (61 kilograms), who is a former International Boxing Federation featherweight champion. Suarez weighed 133 pounds (60 kilograms).

player.

Borg has played just three official matches since 1981. He won five Wimbledons and six French Opens between 1974 and 1981.

Stefan Edberg, Boris Becker, Forget and Andre Agassi all drew first-round byes.

If Borg does get by Arrese, the next opponent will be Yugoslavia's Goran Ivanisevic, seeded fifth, who also received a first-round bye.

Borg practiced against Ivanisevic Wednesday and won a set from the world's eighth-ranked

Arrese figures to be a tough opponent, especially for someone as young as Borg.

The 26-year-old Spaniard beat France's Guy Forget, the world's fourth-ranked player, two weeks ago at Barcelona. He is ranked 54th in the world after being as high as 28th last year.

Arrese won consecutive clay court tournaments last August at San Remo, Italy and Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Borg did not know much about

player.

Borg said in a French TV interview that his comeback had nothing to do with money.

"It is about knowing whether I can do it again."

"I don't know if I look the same but I do feel the same as 10 years ago, both mentally and physically."

"I know that expectations are very high and that people expect me to play good tennis again. I was able to handle pressure in the fast. I hope I can still do it."

Fernandez faces Linda Harvey-Wild, a 64-6-1 victor over fellow American and doubles specialist Gigi Fernandez.

Seles will play sixth-seeded Sandra Cecchini of Italy, who pulled off the biggest surprise of the tournament when she rallied to upset defending champion and fourth-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria 3-6 6-4 6-1.

The top-seeded Seles, 17, displaying her usual punishing two-fisted groundstroking game, won the last 11 games to power past unseeded Federica Bonsignori of Italy 6-1 6-0 in 49 minutes.

As soon as I got out there I wanted to make as quick as I could," Seles said of the match that was delayed 1 hour and 49 minutes by rain.

The Czechoslovak saved two

more match points when he trailed 6-2 in the tiebreak but Jaite finally won it 7-4.

The Argentine was kept waiting to find out his opponent in Sunday's final when rain stopped play shortly after the start of the other semifinal between Cedric Pioline of France and Goran Prpic of Yugoslavia.

Cedric Pioline of France beat Henri Leconte 6-2, 6-4 Friday in the quarterfinals of the Nice tournament.



Diego Maradona

Italian Soccer Federation upholds ban on Maradona

ROME (R) — A 15-month ban on Napoli's Argentine star Diego Maradona for doping was confirmed by the Italian Soccer Federation (FIGC) Saturday.

"The suspension of the footballer Maradona is confirmed," the federation said in a one-line statement.

The FIGC turned down an appeal by Maradona's lawyer Vincenzo Siniscalchi against the ban handed down on April 6 and extended worldwide by the International Football Federation (FIFA).

Maradona tested positive for cocaine after Napoli's home league game against Bari on March 17.

He left for Buenos Aires six days before the April 6 ruling.

The Argentine World Cup captain said in January he wanted to retire.

The FIGC appeals board turned down Siniscalchi's argument that Maradona, 30, had not taken the drug to enhance his performance.

Napoli, who were not held responsible, did not file an appeal on behalf of their former captain.

Maradona was in trouble with Napoli and the FIGC throughout the season, receiving fines of about \$50,000 for missing training and matches without permission.

He also became involved in a court probe into an international drugs and prostitution ring operating in Naples.

Novacek out of Nice Open

NICE, France (R) — Karel Novacek of Czechoslovakia, the only seed left in the \$250,000 Nice Open Tennis Tournament, made his exit to Martin Jaite of Argentina in a tight semifinal Saturday.

Sixth seed Novacek saved five match points before losing 4-6, 6-7.

Jaite looked to have the match in hand when he broke serve early in the final set but Novacek broke back to level at 5-5.

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more match points when he trailed 6-2 in the tiebreak but Jaite finally won it 7-4.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY APRIL 21, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Getting more than usual today will partially protect you from exercising poor judgement but the best plan for now is to avoid being backed into a corner where you must decide now.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19)

You want to get off to new scenes and new personalities but you have many duties to finish and wind up that require your undivided attention.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20)

This is your day to carry through with the things expected of you in way they want them to be done in an exact and particular manner.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21)

Think out the partners you want the most to be allied with in the days ahead and then do the things that they would appreciate to bring them closer.

MONS CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21)

You find you have all kinds of services to render to others so put away that desire to laze about and get into what will please others.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21)

This is the day when you want to have a good time and is possible if you forget your own desires long enough to get approval of close contact.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22)

Take a good look around your home and see what you can do to live up to this as well as a you can.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"This came over the fax machine.
I think it's from your wife."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DOLDY

DOOLY

Statistics confirm strikes crippling Soviet economy

MOSCOW (R) — Detailed figures released by the Soviet state statistics committee Goskomstat Friday confirmed spreading strikes and unrest are crippling the country's economy.

In the first three months of 1991, compared to 1990, Gross National Product (GNP) fell eight per cent, productivity dropped nine per cent, foreign trade slumped by a third.

"It can be supposed that the universal fall in economic activity witnessed during the first quarter will continue," Goskomstat said.

A growing wave of miners' strikes as well as disruption to traditional economic links caused by secessionist republics trying to break ties with Moscow have brought the economy to the verge of collapse.

On Monday the Soviet parliament is due to start discussing a tough anti-crisis programme which includes a moratorium on all strikes and a ban on protests in working hours.

It also calls for tough action against republics which have been demanding greater autonomy or independence and withholding contributions from the central Soviet budget.

President Mikhail Gorbachev Monday said that if the strikes were stopped immediately, it would be too late.

"The figures for the first quarter bear witness to the extremely complex and contradictory economic situation in the country," Goskomstat said.

Brief excerpts from the figure, carried by the official TASS news agency, were released Thursday.

Economic production has been falling steadily over the last two years but the latest figures show the miners' strike has helped turn the decline into a nosedive.

The miners, who have closed around a third of the country's 600 pits, want big rises and Gorbachev's resignation.

The signs of crisis in the economy spread to virtually all spheres," Goskomstat said. "Strikes cost 1.169 million working days in the first three months of the year."

The strike has also cut re-

serves of coking coal for the key metallurgical sector — on April 1 they were only 800,000 tonnes, half the amount available on the same day in 1990.

Goskomstat said production of consumer goods and food — both in very short supply across the country — was falling.

The consumer market is in crisis. Panic buying has grown, especially towards the end of the quarter, virtually all goods are in short supply and speculation is growing," it said.

But this was not the only bad news for the already hard-pressed population — collapsing oil production, the country's main hard currency earner, helped cut imports by 45 per cent in the first quarter compared to 1990.

The country also risks running up a huge budget deficit, because most of the increasingly independence-minded Soviet republics, especially the giant Russian Federation, have slashed contribution to the central budget.

"Implementation of the union budget in the first three months has been extremely unsatisfactory," Goskomstat said.

Republics have only contributed 39 per cent of planned payments to the central government budget and the first quarter deficit of 26.9 billion rubles (\$45.3 billion) already exceeds the planned maximum for the year of 26.7 billion rubles (\$45 billion).

Moscow Radio said the Russian government's own plan for economic reform, which includes plans to quickly sell off enterprises and encourage foreign investment, would soon be submitted to the republic's parliament for approval.

But this is likely to cause conflict with the Kremlin, which says it still controls many of the resources and enterprises on Russian territory which the republic's government plans to privatise.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian coal miners in the seventh week of a strike to force the resignation of Gorbachev welcomed the support of factory workers at a rally Friday.

Nationwide, thousands of fac-

tory workers, outraged by steep price rises which took effect on April 2, have stopped work to boost the protest by an estimated 300,000 miners.

In the Ukrainian coal town of Donetsk Friday, hundreds joined miners in the central October Square. Waving the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag, they vowed not to return to work until Gorbachev quits.

"We are not forcing people to go on strike but they are joining us by their own choice," said Viktor Osovsky, a leader of the Donetsk strike committee, sitting in an office decorated with photographs of Russian Federation leader Boris Yeltsin, Gorbachev's chief political rival.

"We are coordinating our action and trying to create a regional strike organisation," he said.

"I have never been involved in politics before," said Ludmila Radchenko, 57, one of 10,000 workers at a textile mill who went on strike Monday.

"But I worked for 18 years on a salary of 120 rubles. Since prices went up, it's become impossible to survive," she said, as colleagues chanted slogans against the Communist Party.

The average Soviet salary is 270 rubles a month (\$465) at the official exchange rate — \$10 at the tourist rate) and workers have been given a minimum supplement of 60 rubles to cover increases in the cost of food, clothing and most other staples.

The director of the textile mill, who declined to give his name, said his work force walked out after miners visited the plant.

"During a lunch break, a representative of the miners' strike committee visited our factory and the collective decided immediately to go on strike," the director said.

"It's unlikely we'll return to work any time soon," he added.

Thousands of workers from a Donetsk plastics factory also joined the miners' strike this week. Negotiations were under way to try to stop the action spreading to the region's giant steel mill, which employs 20,000 people.

Yugoslav premier warns of economic anarchy, devalues currency by 30 %

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic said Friday the country was on the verge of civil war and economic anarchy and devalued the dinar by just over 30 per cent to try to halt the collapse.

In a keynote speech to parliament setting out economic policy for the rest of the year, Markovic also called for federal elections to complete Yugoslavia's transition to democracy after free elections in its six republics last year.

"National conflicts are of such dimensions and venomousness that the public is constantly being kept on the verge of civil war," Markovic said.

He said annual inflation was likely to be 60 to 70 per cent this year. That would be less than the 120 per cent in 1990 but much more than the 40 per cent he predicted in December.

He said he would limit public spending and reduce the federal budget to 138 billion (\$9.2 billion) at the exchange rate) — 7.7 billion dinars less than the original target set last December.

Markovic also called for banking reforms along Western lines, faster introduction of market forces in the economy and an end to resistance over privatisation.

He appealed to the republics to "bail out" the economy by making it more efficient and accepting the programme for keeping the economy running until they solve their bitter political rows that threaten to tear the country apart.

Otherwise, heavily-indebted Yugoslavia could miss out on a \$1 billion standby loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that would unlock about \$5 billion in loans from other international lenders, he said.

"This is a chance we must not miss," he said.

"From Luxembourg, Washington, London, Paris, Rome, Moscow and others the message is clear: Only a unified Yugoslavia within existing borders and with consistent implementation of economic reforms

can have its place in a united Europe," he stressed.

The key policy change was a 30 per cent devaluation of the dinar's fixed exchange rate to 13 dinars to the Deutsche mark from a rate of nine to one.

This was intended to increase exports and improve the trade deficit, which was more than \$4.5 billion last year.

Markovic said reforms had reached their most critical stage and painted a grim picture of economic decline.

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Karl Otto Poehl

Bundesbank rules out interest rate cut

FRANKFURT (R) — Germany's central bank issued a series of tough new warnings on inflation Friday, saying monetary policy had to stay tight to defend the mark.

It ignored U.S. calls for lower interest rates, Bundesbank President Karl Otto Poehl said there was no scope for the Bundesbank to ease policy. He was speaking after the mark had fallen to its lowest level against the dollar since mid-December.

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Brady says U.S. will pursue other creditors to cut Egyptian debts

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady Saturday urged Egypt's creditors to follow Washington's lead and write off half of Cairo's foreign debt obligations.

Writeoffs by the United States, oil-rich Arab states and a few smaller creditors already have lowered the outstanding Egyptian debt by almost one-third, to around \$35 billion.

Brady, on a 12-day tour of Europe and the Middle East, spoke to reporters after a one-hour meeting with President Hosni Mubarak. "We told the president we are most keen to continue to work on debt reduction for Egypt," Brady said.

Late last year the United States forgave military debts totalling \$6.7 billion in gratitude for Egypt's active role in the Washington-led alliance against Iraq. Wealthy Arab states in the coalition wrote off \$7 billion owed by Egypt.

But comments from another top Bundesbank official seemed to suggest German interest rates did not need to rise further.

Deputy President Helmut Schlesinger said recent high wage deals and government plans for higher taxes were not on their own reason enough for the Bundesbank to change monetary policy.

Parliament will start debating its programme next Wednesday.

Markovic aides and the media have suggested he may seek a confidence vote if his plan is rejected but the prime minister said he was determined to carry on, even though Croatia has said it rejects his programme.

"You can be sure the government is still ready and able to put its human professional and moral energy at the disposal of all citizens with the aim of ensuring economic success and political freedom for all of us," he said.

Poehl said recent wage deals and high public borrowing were creating risks to inflation. "Germany cannot avoid tight monetary policy and relatively high interest rates."

Both Poehl and Brady are due to attend a meeting of Group of Seven (G-7) finance ministers and central bank governors in Washington next week.

Schlesinger told German television the trend for German raw material prices had been favourable, although inflationary risks remained.

"The negative factors alone are not a compelling reason for a change in policy," Schlesinger said.

There had been speculation the Bundesbank could raise interest rates at a meeting Thursday. But it left policies unchanged.

Bundesbank officials were adamant there would be no relaxation of monetary policy. Poehl said the central bank aimed to defy predictions that inflation would rise to average 3.5 per cent this year.

West German consumer prices rose 2.5 per cent in the year to March.

Schlesinger said the Bundesbank was not happy with the current dollar/mark rate. But he stressed the dollar was generally stronger and there was no specific mark weakness.

The dollar reached highs of 1.7280 marks on Friday morning, its highest level since late January 1990. It closed in Frankfurt on Thursday at 1.6800.

During the Gulf crisis, for example, U.S. officials frequently cited U.N. resolutions as justification for their actions.

Officials of U.S. President George Bush say the country is committed to paying all U.S. arrears, despite economic hard times.

President Bush is fully committed to making all our current payments and arrears and we intend to work closely with the executive branch and Congress to defuse predictions that inflation would rise to average 3.5 per cent this year.

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U.S. officials say the U.S. government also owes \$150.1 million for peacekeeping forces, while the United States says its back dues total \$132.4 million, and its assessment for 1991 is \$88.9 million.

That does not include the newest Iraq-Kuwait peacekeeping force, expected to cost the United States about \$38 million or 30.69 per cent of the total cost of \$123 million for the first year. The United States pays about 31 per cent of all U.N. peacekeeping contributions — more than any other nation.

For the Iraq-Kuwait border force, the United States has promised to pay its share, along with Britain, China, France and the Soviet Union. The five permanent members of the Security Council will be serving together in peacekeeping forces for the first time. The border monitors were mandated by the Gulf war ceasefire resolution adopted earlier this month.

U.S. officials are quick to point out that despite its arrears, the U.S. contributes enormously, more than any other nation.

Of the annual \$1 billion U.N. debt, U.S. diplomats see a test of the reborn U.S. commitment to the United Nations. Because of policy differences, the United States over the years has withheld some U.N. assessments, including those aiding the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the South West African People's Organisation.

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Enquiries: For 5 days only ending 26/12/91 Tel: 810551 - Amman.

Philips warns restructuring benefits may be delayed

AMSTERDAM (R) — Philips, Europe's biggest consumer electronics group, has said stagnant sales could delay benefits from a major corporate restructuring programme.

N.V. Philips Gloeilampenfabrieken said it still expected to report a profit this year after losing 4.24 billion guilders (\$2.7 billion).

But Chairman Jan Timmer cautioned in the company's

annual report that benefits from the restructuring undertaken last year might show up later than expected.

.... The possibility cannot be ruled out that, as a result of stagnating sales, the positive effects of the changes will manifest themselves somewhat later than we originally anticipated," he said.

"They will, however, already become clearly visible in 1991,"

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Analysts and dealers said investors were disappointed that the company's long-awaited recovery may be further delayed.

"They seem to be postponing the restructuring gains by a few months. That doesn't please people," said Roel Goossens of brokerage Van Meer James Capel.

The overhaul, which began last year, includes up to 55,000 job cuts, reorganisation of several divisions and discontinuing unprofitable activities. The company took charges of 4.65 billion guilders (\$2.5 billion) in 1990 to pay for the restructuring.

Previously the government has forced workers to buy treasury bonds by docking their pay, a measure that has provoked intense resentment and threatened industrial unrest.

The experiment is an attempt to find a more market-oriented mechanism for the distribution of government debt issues," a statement issued at the news conference said.

It said the aim was to make state debt more attractive to investors.

Economic reform was stopped dead in its tracks after June, 1989, when the army crushed a student-led movement for democracy. Since then hardliners have stressed state control and socialist orthodoxy in economic affairs.

No figure was given for the interest the three-year bonds will carry, but sources close to the syndicate said it would be 10 per cent, which is currently the rate for three-year bank deposit rates.

Gorbachev hints at support for South Korea's U.N. bid

SOGWIPO, South Korea (R) — Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev ended a relaxed South Korean visit Saturday with a nod of support for Seoul's long-held desire to join the United Nations and appeals for economic and political cooperation.

The 17-hour visit, held appropriately at South Korea's favourite honeymoon resort, was the first trip ever made to Korea — North or South — by a Soviet leader. It came only seven months after Moscow and Seoul opened diplomatic relations.

"This year the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea have walked a long distance in a very short time," Gorbachev told reporters at a briefing on Cheju Island off the southern tip of the divided peninsula.

Gorbachev arrived in South Korea late Friday following a disappointing four-day visit to Japan. He met South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo for 95 minutes Saturday and left for home in mid-afternoon.

In an atmosphere of cordiality in marked contrast to his chilly visit to Japan, Gorbachev called for more trade and suggested both countries, once bitter enemies, conclude a treaty of

friendship and cooperation.

South Korean officials said Gorbachev understood Seoul's desire to join the United Nations and agreed with the principle.

Gorbachev also said he agreed with South Korea that North Korea should accede to a nuclear safeguards treaty and international inspection requirements.

"The two presidents share the same views on these two (nuclear and U.N. matters)" Kim Chong-Whi, Roh's national security adviser who was present at the talks, told reporters after the meeting.

"President Gorbachev... expressed his understanding of President Roh Tae-Woo's position in view of the universality principle of the United Nations," said presidential spokesman Lee Soo-Jung.

"They agreed to consult through exchanges of visits for foreign ministers on this issue and other issues of mutual concern," Lee said.

Soviet newspapers Saturday put a brave face on President Mikhail Gorbachev's disappointing visit to Japan, calling it although the trip produced few concrete results it had paved the way for future cooperation.

"Japanese society, as well as our own people, should understand the great improvements in Soviet-Japanese relations which took place as a result of Soviet president's visit," the Communist Party daily Pravda said.

Gorbachev left Tokyo empty-handed Friday after tough negotiations during which the two sides could only agree to continue discussing a territorial dispute which is blocking better ties and large-scale Japanese aid to Moscow.

Pravda, which described the talks as a breakthrough, said it was important to have good relations with a country which was becoming one of the most influential in the world.

"This economic colossus is now starting to gain a corresponding political standing on the world stage," it said.

The Tokyo talks ended in deadlock after Gorbachev ruled out the return of four small islands which the Soviet army seized at the end of World War II.

Japan has made it quite clear it will not grant much-needed economic aid to Moscow until the islands are handed back.

But the two sides did manage to sign a joint declaration

agreeing to discuss the reduction of Soviet military presence in the four islands and other related questions.

Komsomolskaya Pravda doubted the agreement would bring immediate benefits but said the door to mutual understanding had been opened.

"Our leaders are probably disappointed that they did not succeed in getting credits," Konstantin Sarkisyan, an expert on Japan, told the newspaper.

But the Defence Ministry daily Krasnaya Zvezda, opposed to the return of the islands, said the visit had been successful and described the joint declaration as a powerful political document allowing the two sides to broaden their cooperation.

"If there is any disappointment, I think it is groundless," wrote correspondent Captain V. Kuznetsov from Tokyo.

The daily Rabochaya Tribuna also described the talks as successful, saying the abnormal relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union had finally been ended.

Pravda said it had been unrealistic to expect economic aid until the chaotic Soviet economy had been sorted out.

Akhromeyev, an adviser to Gorbachev, said 180,000 people

Kremlin underestimated Chernobyl disaster, Soviet marshal says

MOSCOW (R) — A senior Soviet army officer has said the Kremlin had underestimated the scale of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which soldiers fought to control as the world was kept in the dark.

Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who coordinated forces involved in the clean-up operation, said President Mikhail Gorbachev was told of the accident the day it happened — April 26.

At a meeting held to mark the fifth anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster, he said he believed Gorbachev and others did not realise at the time serious the consequences were.

"I got the impression that they underestimated the real scale of the accident... as far as the consequences were concerned, people did not have a full picture of it," he said.

Soviet authorities maintained a virtual blackout on information for almost three days after the fourth reactor at Chernobyl exploded, killing 31 people in the immediate aftermath.

Thousands more may have died from the radiation which spilled across western areas of the Soviet Union.

While the disaster alarmed millions throughout the world, Gorbachev kept silent until making a televised speech 18 days after the accident.

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Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev

had been evacuated from the region and the disaster had cost the country 20 billion roubles (\$35 billion at the official exchange rate).

"The scale of the accident was enormous and of course the scale of the losses to our country was enormous," he said.

"Without exaggerating, I can say that the work done during the first month and a half was like during the war."

Rumors down the dramatic hours after the explosion, Akhromeyev, then army chief of general staff, told veterans of the clean-up campaign he remembered that day as clearly as June 22, 1941 — the day Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

"These were the two most fatal tragedies in my life in which I took an active part," he said. "The Chernobyl disaster is still a tangible threat to this country."

He said he learned of the explosion at 2:20 a.m. — about an hour after the accident occurred — and summoned other military commanders.

At 3:30, Akhromeyev and his aides checked what troops and civil defence units were deployed around Chernobyl and sent military transport planes to pick up a special regiment.

At 6, he was told the fire had been extinguished but there had been an explosion at the fourth reactor which released more radiation. "By this time, it was already clear to me how dreadful the consequences were. I am not a chemical specialist but, as a general, I was well aware of the consequences."

At 7:30, Akhromeyev reported to the defence minister on what had happened and he approved the measures taken. Akhromeyev also contacted the government and KGB security police.

At 9:30, he called Gorbachev and reported to him. Gorbachev had he already knew about the disaster and also approved the military deployments.

At mid-day, it was clear the wind was blowing west and there were enormous areas of contamination.

Hardliners call for Gorbachev's removal

MOSCOW (AP) — Hardline leaders called Saturday for Mikhail Gorbachev to be removed from the presidency, accusing him of squandering his power and allowing the nation to approach catastrophe.

"What we need is a state of emergency, but Gorbachev will never do this," said Col. Viktor Alkin, speaking to a conference of the hardline Soyuz Group.

"The only way out for us now is to collect signatures to convene a special parliament session" to remove the president, he said.

The demand came during a weekend conference where a diverse group of Communist Party members, hardline lawmakers and other right-wing activists were discussing strategy in the midst of the political paralysis gripping the country.

The meeting came five days before a plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee was expected to discuss Gorbachev's position as chief of the 18-million member organisation.

"The country is in a state of crisis and is approaching catastrophe," Yuri Blokhin, leader of the Soyuz Group, told the 700 delegates to the conference. Blokhin urged the delegates to approve a resolution calling for a six-month state of emergency.

He said the state of emergency would suspend republican parliaments and create a direct line of authority from the Kremlin to local officials; re-establish strong central control over all factories and halt private enterprise by small businesses; repeat the unpopular 3-month-old sales tax; reverse recent price increases on basic consumer goods; and ban all rallies and opposition political groups.

"If the government doesn't take these steps, Soyuz is ready to take all responsibility," for putting these measures into effect, he said.

The Soyuz Group claims more than 700 members in branches across the country. It was founded last fall as an umbrella organisation for disgruntled hardliners who thought Gorbachev was allowing fragmentation of the country by secessionist republics. It has evolved into the largest organised conservative force demanding Gorbachev's resignation.

The commission says the Soviets had unwittingly exported the model to the United States. To take it back home would be to

Curfew lifted in capital of Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (AP) — An overnight curfew in the capital of Azerbaijan was lifted, 15 months after it was imposed in the wake of fatal unrest.

The curfew was imposed in Baku by the Soviet parliament on Jan. 20, 1990, a week after Azerbaijanis attacked ethnic Armenian residents of the capital. More than 170 people, including Soviet troops, were killed in the unrest.

Azerbaijan President Ayaz Matalibov issued a decree lifting the overnight curfew, according to the Soviet News Agency (TASS) and the Azerbaijani News Service (ASSA).

In the latest violence in Nagorno-Karabakh, an abortive attempt was made Friday to blow up a convoy of trucks near

Stepanakert, the enclave's administrative centre TASS reported. There: were no injuries.

Also Friday, an aide to Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan said Soviet Interior Ministry troops were being sent to the Shumayri district in Azerbaijan, north of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Mostly Armenians live in the district, and many are being deported from their homes, said the aide, Alexander Ambartsumyan.

Armenians have been claiming that the government of Azerbaijan has been systematically deporting Armenians from areas of Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh, as part of an effort to keep control of the region.

Soviet problems hit supplies to Cuba

HAVANA (R) — President Fidel Castro says arms and fuel supplies to Cuba are being hit by economic and political turmoil in the Soviet Union at a time when the island is most threatened by the United States.

Castro said the problems currently affecting the Soviet Union, Cuba's main ally and economic supplier, were creating "colossal difficulties" for the island and were disrupting supplies of arms.

"We will need more arms than ever before and we will not be able to have more arms than ever before," he said, without giving details of the arms shipments affected.

It was the first time the Cuban leader had spoken of the effect on

Cuba's defence capability of the disruptions to supplies from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Castro praised his country's armed forces for the way in which they were maintaining a high state of combat readiness while reducing consumption of fuel and other scarce materials.

The Soviet Union has said it will continue to maintain a military presence in Cuba for as long as the island is threatened by its powerful neighbour.

Castro said Soviet supplies of raw materials such as wood and metals had fallen off almost to nothing, although shipments of oil and food were still arriving.

U.S. refuses to return Soviet space reactor

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (AP) — When Soviet officials brought a mode of one of their spacecraft reactors to a scientific convention here in January, it was considered an unusual sign of international nuclear cooperation.

When the Soviets agreed to sell a working model of the Topaz 2 reactor to a U.S. research group, that was considered even more extraordinary.

But when the Soviets tried to take their model back home, that was another story. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said the Soviets couldn't have their model back.

The commission says the Soviets had unwittingly exported the model to the United States. To take it back home would be to

export it a second time — this time out of the United States, regulators say. Exports of nuclear technology are strictly limited under U.S. law and international treaty.

It doesn't matter that the display model of the space power plant is designed, built and owned by the Soviets, NRC spokeswoman Sue Gagner told the Albuquerque Journal in a story published Friday.

"There are no provisions in the Atomic Energy Act for exhibits or things coming in for display. According to our reading of the Atomic Energy Act, this is an export," Gagner said.

At the symposium on space nuclear power systems in January, a U.S. research consortium

Mitterrand brings Romania in from the cold

BUCHAREST (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand has brought Romania in from the cold, breaking its isolation with a state visit during which he threw his full support behind the post-Communist government.

Ten thousand supporters of President Ion Iliescu's National Salvation Front (NSF) gave Mitterrand a rousing welcome Friday when he visited Iasi, an Iliescu stronghold near the Soviet border, at the end of the tour.

"Long live France, long live Mitterrand and Iliescu," shouted the crowd.

De Klerk planned to press for an additional relaxation of sanctions against South Africa, in response to his efforts to dismantle its apartheid system of racial segregation, an embassy spokesman said.

Diplomats described the idea as a trial balloon and said it could complicate talks among the 12 EC governments over political

monstrators threw eggs at the French entourage.

Romania has been shunned by other Western countries since the pro-government violence last June for which opposition groups blamed Iliescu.

"I feel there is a definite return to democracy in Romania and nothing I have seen or heard here can contradict this feeling," Mitterrand told reporters.

It was the first visit by a foreign leader since Romania's December 1989 revolution, which ended four decades of one-party Communist rule and toppled Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

During the visit, the two countries agreed to draw up a treaty of friendship and cooperation within the new European security

framework which has been emerging since the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war.

Agreements were signed to set up a Romanian-French management institute to help Romania's transition to a market economy and to create a youth exchange programme.

The French company Bouygues said it was linking up with Romanian enterprises to build a \$110-million trade centre in Bucharest, the first of its kind in central Europe and the biggest joint venture reported so far with a foreign firm.

Iliescu told a news conference

Mitterrand had invited Romania, the only East European nation with a Latin tongue and a strong affinity to French culture, to join the annual conference of Francoophone countries in Paris. In a speech to the Romanian parliament, the French president dwelled on his own scheme for a European confederation in which he said Romania should be included.

Mitterrand's trip was marred by several protests by Romanian opposition groups which said the visit was ill-timed.

He dismissed critical questions by local journalists, saying: "I am not the one who elects the people to run this country and I am not the one who chooses the people in opposition... Romania's internal affairs are not my concern."

Column 8

Hecklers fail to disrupt Pope's speech

ROME (AP) — A small group of protesters shouted and whistled at Pope John Paul II as he addressed students outside Rome's La Sapienza University. State television said the hecklers were not university students but were apparently led by a group of feminists. Some of the 2,000 to 3,000 students in the crowd intervened and convinced the hecklers to stop, the broadcast said. It was not clear what the hecklers were shouting, but a few of the protesters held a banner which read: "Love one another but with contraception." The Pope continued his speech without pause.

Flight attendants fake hijacking

DETROIT (AP) — A newlywed Lebanese-American couple complained that two Usair flight attendants dressed like Arabs and faked an in-flight hijacking, frightening them so much they cut short their honeymoon. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Usair said they were investigating, and the airline said it will crack down hard if it confirms the incident on the Jan. 26 flight from Pittsburgh to West Palm Beach, Florida. Joe and Sarah Fawaz told the FAA in a complaint that two male attendants wore fake Arab headresses and glasses with attached rubber noses and herded two female attendants down the aisle with a cloth covered stick that looked like a gun, said FAA operations manager Joseph Stevens. "This is a hijack. Take this plane to Baghdad," Fawaz, a 26-year-old gas station manager, quoted the men as saying. "My wife was petrified when it happened," he told the Detroit News. Fawaz said his wife arrived in the United States just eight months ago and speaks little English. "I told her to calm down," he said. "I tried to explain to her, this is a joke. She looks around, and it's like everybody's laughing at us. We were the only Lebanese couple on the plane. It wasn't a joke."

Man jailed for marital rape

LONDON (R) — A court sentenced a man to five years in prison for raping his wife in Britain's first such conviction where a husband lived with his wife at the time of the assault. The court in Winchester, southern England, threw out a defence argument that it was not a crime for a man to force his wife to have sex if he lived with her. The ruling reinforced a legal principle established in Britain last month that men do not have an automatic right to sex within marriage. "Although at the end of the 19th century a man had a right to have sex with his wife, over the last 30 or 40 years that has been whittled away by judicial decisions," Judge Christopher Rose said. "Now, a month after an appeal